

## MIND

## A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

## PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

## I.—ON THE RELATION OF SOME EMPIRICAL PROPOSITIONS TO THEIR EVIDENCE.

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THE question I intend to discuss in this paper is whether it is logically possible that, though I should have all the evidence which I do have for saying that I am not now dreaming, and though, however many tests I may make in the future, they will all confirm this evidence—yet I should now be dreaming. In other words, I wish to discuss whether the following proposition, which I shall call (1), is or is not self-contradictory: (1) "I have all the evidence which I do have for saying that I am not now dreaming, and however many tests I may make in the future, they will all confirm this evidence, but I am now dreaming".

It is important, first of all, to distinguish this question from another one, with which some philosophers seem to have confused it, namely, from the question whether the proposition "I am dreaming now" is self-contradictory. This proposition forms a *part* of (1), and I shall call it (2); and I wish to insist that the question of the self-contradictoriness of (2) is quite a different one from that of the self-contradictoriness of (1): for although, at least with one use of the term "self-contradictory" as applied to conjunctions, if (2) were self-contradictory, it would follow that (1) is also self-contradictory,<sup>1</sup> yet from the fact (if it is a fact) that (2) is not self-contradictory, it does *not* follow that (1) is not self-contradictory. The proposition, "There is no

<sup>1</sup> In the most common use of the term "self-contradictory", as applied to conjunctions, if *q* is self-contradictory, the conjunction of *p* and *q* is also self-contradictory.

desk in my rooms", is certainly not self-contradictory: but from this it by no means follows that the compound proposition, "I have all the evidence which I do have that there is a desk in my rooms, and however many tests I may make in the future, they will all confirm this evidence, but there is no desk in my rooms", is also not self-contradictory.

Thus, when Mr. Ayer<sup>1</sup> says that however many favourable tests I may make (to convince myself that I am not dreaming), it still remains logically possible that I *am* dreaming after all, he is not saying anything irrelevant. And when Mr. Malcolm,<sup>2</sup> criticising Mr. Ayer, claims that there is no connexion between verification and logical possibility, he is wrong. Let me explain this. What Mr. Ayer says is this. There is a sense of certainty in which we cannot be certain of the truth of any proposition which implies the existence of a material thing. "It must be admitted then", he says, "that there is a sense in which it is true to say that we can never be sure, with regard to any proposition implying the existence of a material thing, that we are not somehow being deceived."<sup>3</sup> This is the sense in which "certain" means "demonstratively certain", the sense of "certain" which applies to the propositions of logic and mathematics. In *this* sense of "certain", Mr. Ayer says, material-object propositions are not certain. But he himself goes on to point out that to say this is misleading for it suggests that the state of "being certain" is one the attainment of which is conceivable, but unfortunately not within our power. But in fact, he says, the conception of such a state is self-contradictory. For, he goes on, in order to be certain, in this sense, of the truth of a material-object proposition, we should have to have completed an infinite series of verifications; and it is an analytic proposition that one cannot run through all the members of an infinite series. He then makes a blunder: he goes on to say,<sup>4</sup> "Accordingly, what we should say, if we want to avoid misunderstanding, is not that we can never be certain that any of the propositions in which we express our perceptual judgments are true [he is talking here about material-object propositions], but rather that the notion of certainty does not apply to propositions of this kind. It applies to the propositions of logic and mathematics, and the fact that it does apply to them is an essential mark of distinction between them and empirical propositions."

<sup>1</sup> *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> "Certainty and Empirical Statements," *MIND*, January, 1942, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Ayer, *op. cit.*, p. 44

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

To say that *the notion of certainty* does not apply to empirical propositions is, of course, a blunder. But I think Mr. Malcolm puts too much stress on it. Perhaps Mr. Ayer made it because he was really confused; but it seems to me more likely to suppose that it was simply due to carelessness. For all that he himself has said is that there is *a* sense of certainty in which we cannot be certain of the truth of material-object propositions; he has explained what this sense is; and has said that it is *inapplicable* to material-object propositions. Surely there is nothing in all this to suggest that he would not admit that there is *another* sense of "certain" which *is* applicable to them; and indeed, it seems to me that his statements imply that he does realize that it is perfectly correct to say of some material-object propositions that they are certain—in the appropriate sense of "certain". But this is an incidental point. What I want to emphasize is something else. It is that Mr. Ayer is right when he takes the question of the verification of the proposition, "I am not dreaming now", to be relevant to the question whether it is or is not logically possible that, after all, I should now be dreaming. He is right, even if some of the things he says are careless or confused. He is right, because what he is concerned with is not merely the proposition, "I am now dreaming", but the proposition, "I have all the evidence which I do have for saying that I am not now dreaming, and however many tests I may make in the future, they will all confirm this evidence, but I *am* now dreaming". What he is concerned with is whether or not *this* proposition is self-contradictory. And surely in order to answer this it is absolutely necessary to consider the nature of the evidential propositions in question. For their conjunction constitutes the first part of the compound proposition with regard to which we are asking whether or not it is self-contradictory.

The statement, "There are no articles of furniture in my rooms", is certainly not self-contradictory; but the statement, "There is a table, a desk, a sofa and five chairs in my rooms, but there are no articles of furniture in my rooms", certainly is self-contradictory. For the first part of it *entails* that there are some articles of furniture in my rooms. And, similarly, our own question is whether or not my evidential propositions *entail* that I am not now dreaming. If they do, then our compound proposition is self-contradictory; if they do not, it is not. If they do, then I cannot accept them, and at the same time claim that yet it is logically possible that I should be dreaming; for then I should be contradicting myself.

Why did Mr. Malcolm think that "there is no connexion between verification and logical possibility"? What could have made him say that the extent to which I verify the statement, "I am not dreaming now", can have no bearing on the existence of the sort of possibility of which Mr. Ayer was speaking? I think the answer to this is simply that he failed to see that the problem Mr. Ayer was concerned with is *not* whether the proposition (2), "I am dreaming now", is self-contradictory, but whether the compound proposition (1), "I have all the evidence which I do have for saying that I am not dreaming now, and however many tests I may make in the future, they will all confirm this evidence, but I am dreaming now", is self-contradictory.

Now, what can we say about (1)? Can we say that the evidential propositions which I should use to support the statement that I am not now dreaming (including amongst them also those "future evidence" propositions<sup>1</sup>) entail that I am not now dreaming? In other words, can we say that (1) is self-contradictory?

It will be more convenient, before attempting to answer this, to ask the same question about a different proposition, a proposition which is very similar to (1), but which yet lacks one important peculiarity of it. This is the proposition which I have already mentioned in another connexion: "I have all the evidence which I do have that there is a desk in my rooms, and however many tests I may make in the future, they will all confirm this evidence, but there is no desk in my rooms". Let us call this proposition (3). Is (3) self-contradictory? In other words, can we say that it is logically possible that, though I should have all the evidence which I do have for saying that there is a desk in my rooms, and though however many tests I may make in the future they will all confirm this evidence, yet there should be no desk in my rooms? What Mr. Ayer says amounts to saying that (3) is *not* self-contradictory, that is, that it is logically possible that I should have all the evidence, etc., etc., and yet that there should be no desk in my rooms. Or, differently still, that all my evidential propositions (including the "future evidence" propositions) do not entail that there is a desk in my rooms. For if what he says about the case of dreams<sup>2</sup> were applied to the case of (3), and it is clearly meant to apply to (3), it would amount to saying that however many favourable tests I may make to convince myself that there is

<sup>1</sup> All of which, *ex hypothesi*, are confirmatory.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 43.



a desk in my rooms, it remains logically possible that still further tests will be such as to make me conclude that there wasn't a desk in my rooms. And at first I was myself inclined to say that though I have *conclusive* evidence that there is a desk in my rooms, that though I *know* that there is a desk in my rooms, yet I can *imagine* circumstances which would convince me that I was mistaken.

Now, it seems to me that it is unnecessary to say, as Mr. Ayer does, that further tests may be such as to make me *conclude* that I was mistaken; or to say, as I was myself inclined to say, that I can imagine evidence which would *convince* me that I was mistaken. All that is necessary is to say that I can imagine evidence which would make me *doubt* if I was right; or better still, that I can imagine evidence which I should *count as relevant* to the statement that there was a desk in my rooms, but not to my evidential statements. For this is all that is needed in order to show that the evidential propositions do not entail the material-object proposition, that is, in order to show that (3) is not self-contradictory.

Now, why do we say so readily that the evidential propositions do not entail the material-object proposition? that (3) is not self-contradictory? I think this is chiefly because it seems so obvious that no matter how many favourable tests I may make, there will still be another test, which may turn out to be *unfavourable*. That is, that the series of possible tests is infinite, and therefore no finite set of evidential statements, however long it may be, will ever do—will ever entail the material-object statement. But let us look into this. After all, this is not really an *argument* for saying that the evidential propositions do not entail the material-object proposition (*i.e.* for saying that (3) is not self-contradictory), but only a reformulation of the claim. For it simply says that however many favourable tests I may make, it is yet logically possible that the next test will be *unfavourable*. And to say that the evidential propositions do not entail the material-object proposition is to say precisely the same. What we ought to do now is to examine the nature of the claim that however many favourable tests I may make, it is yet logically possible that the next test will be *unfavourable*. Let us take our specific example. There is a desk in my rooms. I have as excellent evidence for this as I could have for any proposition of the required sort.<sup>1</sup> In fact, I need not make

<sup>1</sup> Here some philosopher is almost bound to say, "But what about your use of the word 'desk'? May you not be misusing the word? Perhaps this is not called 'desk'." But this is the same point in disguise.

[Note continued overleaf]

any further tests at all. But suppose I do ; suppose I look at it again, from different angles, feel it again, bring in other people. What does it mean to say that after I have done all this, it is yet logically possible that the next test will be unfavourable ?

Before inquiring into this, let us notice that even the above case is not *exactly* the case in question. For in the above case we are asking whether the evidence which I *now* have for saying that there is a desk in my rooms (that is, both the evidence which I had before making any further tests and the new confirmatory evidence which I got as a result <sup>1</sup>) entails that there is a desk in my rooms. But the claim is not merely that the evidence which I *now* have does not entail this, but also that *no* finite evidence does. It will be seen, however, that in spite of this the above case is good enough for our purpose, at least to begin with. What we are now, therefore, going to consider is the proposition (4), "I have all the evidence which I do have that there is a desk in my rooms, but there is no desk in my rooms".

Now suppose that having all the evidence which I do have that there is a desk in my rooms, and having also made those further confirmatory tests, I look away for a moment, and then, looking back again, can see the desk no longer. I look again, and again see nothing ; I try to touch the place where I thought the desk was standing, but can touch nothing. I bring in other people, all my previous witnesses, and they, too, no longer get any "deskish" sensations. Now, is it the case that this proves that my evidential propositions do not entail the material-object proposition ? I suppose this is what would be said. I suppose this is exactly the sort of situation which Mr. Ayer would have given in support of his claim ; and I myself, when I first thought about it, was inclined to agree that the evidential propositions do not entail the "desk proposition", and, further, was inclined to give the above example as a *proof* of this.

But I believe now that to give this, or any other example of this sort, as a proof of, or an argument for, the lack of the entailment in question, is to be guilty of a gross and most important confusion. Why is this a confusion ? The answer to this is of central importance ; and, in fact, by answering it, I shall also have answered the question I began with, that is, the I have as excellent evidence that I am *not* misusing the word as I could have for any proposition about people's verbal habits. And all I am going to say will apply to this also.

<sup>1</sup> This new evidence can well be left out ; it is of no importance and only tends to confuse the issue. But some people *will* insist on putting it in.

question whether my evidential propositions do or do not entail the "desk proposition".

Let us recall the situation I have just described. Imagine that having all the evidence which I do have for saying that there is a desk in my rooms, I turn away for a moment, and then, looking back again, get no further "deskish" sensations; and that similarly other people, who before have had similar evidence for the desk's existence, no longer get any "deskish" sensations either. *This* we can imagine: we have just done so. But I claim that the fact that we can imagine this is no reason either for saying that my evidence does not entail the existence of the desk, or for saying that it does entail it.<sup>1</sup> For the point is *not* whether we can *imagine* such a situation; the point is *what should we say* under such circumstances; *what should we say* if this situation occurred. The mere fact that we can imagine this or any similar situation shows nothing. For any reason for saying that one proposition (or one set of propositions) does or does not entail another proposition (or another set of propositions) must be based on the way in which these propositions are used;<sup>2</sup> and this is seen most clearly by considering a number of situations—especially some unusual situations—and asking whether in such situations we should accept the one proposition and yet deny the other. But obviously if this is so, it is not enough just to *imagine* some such situations: it is absolutely necessary to consider what would be our "verbal behaviour" in such situations. Should we then say that we were mistaken in our original material-object statement, or should we say that we were not—*this* is the sort of inquiry which is relevant to the entailment-problem. And by saying merely that I can *imagine* such situations I am *not* giving an answer to the problem: for by saying merely that I can *imagine* such situations I am not answering the only question which could answer it: what should we say in such situations?

I think that if we reflect on the matter, all this will appear quite obvious. And yet philosophers constantly forget or overlook it, and talk as if by merely imagining such situations you *were* giving an answer to this question, and so *were* settling the problem. Why? I find it very difficult to give a clear and satisfactory answer to this; but I think the reason is roughly

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered, of course, that what I am discussing now is *not* whether the one does or does not entail the other, but whether the fact that we can imagine this situation is relevant to the question.

<sup>2</sup> Or strictly, the way in which the sentences expressing these propositions are used.

as follows. There is an immense temptation to suppose that by imagining a situation like the one I gave, we are *eo ipso* giving its use. In other words, to suppose that the picture of such a situation carries with it its own application. Let me try to make this clearer. By imagining our situation I gave you a series of pictures: in fact, I could have drawn them, or better still, I could have shown them on a film. But by doing merely this I have not shown you the *place* of these pictures. If you had a collection of pictures showing various scenes taken from ordinary life, pictures showing, for example, scenes from the life of a man from his birth to his death, and arranged in their temporal order, you would not have known where to add *my* pictures. But why are we so apt to suppose that my series of pictures does carry with it its own application, that by showing it we are giving its use? I think this is because my pictures are so *similar* to our ordinary pictures. In other words, because the situation they picture does resemble situations with which we are familiar. We do sometimes see things which look like real books, but on closer inspection turn out to be dummies. We do sometimes see things which look like living men, but on closer inspection turn out to be waxworks. We do sometimes think that we are seeing a material object, but then discover that we were having an illusion or an hallucination. With all this we are more or less familiar. Had I described *such* situations, given you *such* pictures, you would have known where they belong to—you know why such things happen, when they happen, what we say when they do. They are, even if unusual, a part of everyday life; and their descriptions, their pictures, are a part of our language. But *my* situation is not—it is similar to them, it is, so to speak, their limiting case; but it has, as yet, no use, and by merely describing the situation I have not given its use. But just because it is so similar, we are tempted to suppose that it *does* belong to our language, that by describing it I *have* given its use.

Thus the mere fact that we can imagine the situation gives no answer whatever to what people would say if it occurred. And to the question whether my evidential propositions do or do not entail the existence of the desk, what people would say if the situation occurred is the only relevant consideration; and it is also decisive.

Now, what should we say if our situation really occurred? Those who claim that the evidential propositions do not entail the existence of the desk must claim that if our situation occurred, we should at least become doubtful whether there was a desk in

my rooms: that if it occurred, we should consider it to be relevant to the "desk proposition", but not to our evidential propositions. But now, can we really say that this is what we should do? It seems to me that we cannot. For (and here what I have said above again comes in) we are imagining a situation for which no description exists in our language. We just *do not know* what we should say under such circumstances. And surely, we should be so astounded as to find ourselves, even then, completely at a loss. We might possibly say, if we felt that we must describe the situation somehow, "So there wasn't a desk here after all—we were all victims of a long and very consistent hallucination"; we might say this, but we might not. Or we might say, "We are not certain that what we saw was not really a desk, but we are now rather doubtful about it". But again, we might say this, but we might not. For we might say, "There always has been and still is a desk here, but now we are all having a negative hallucination"; or "There was a desk here, but it has disappeared". In this last case we should indeed be changing the grammar of physical-object words, but if such situations really occurred, physical-object words would probably become useless. Or we might say that we never did have any "deskish" sensation, but have only just now got all these delusive "memories". In fact, in such a situation we might say and do any number of things. And we certainly cannot say now what we *should* do; nor should we know then what to do.

It may, however, be said that no matter what we should *in fact* say, it would be *right* to say that we are doubtful about the original material-object statements, and *wrong* to say anything else. But this is again the same confusion. For the point is that our present use of language does not determine what we should say; that, in other words, our present use of language does not provide for such a case. And therefore there would be nothing either right or wrong about our describing the case in any way we pleased.

Now, what does it all amount to? It amounts to this: that it is *neither right nor wrong* to say that my evidential propositions do not entail the "desk proposition", and that it is *neither right nor wrong* to say that my evidential propositions do entail the "desk proposition". In other words, that it is *neither right nor wrong* to say that the proposition (4)<sup>1</sup> is self-contradictory, and *neither right nor wrong* to say that it is not self-contradictory.

<sup>1</sup>P. 294.

But why is one inclined to think that if we do ask the question, "What would people do under these circumstances?", the answer is, "They would doubt their original material-object statement, but not their evidential statements". I think the reason is the same as the reason why some philosophers are inclined to think that by merely *imagining* the situation they have already answered the entailment-problem; that is, that by merely imagining the situation they have already settled what people would say if it occurred. It is that the situation bears some similarity to those with which we are fairly familiar. For instance, it bears some similarity to cases of hallucination and illusion. And as these cases do sometimes happen, our language provides for them: there is a settled way of describing them. If I describe a certain situation (with which some people claim to be very familiar) by saying that the pink rats I "saw" were really there, though no one else could see them, and though they have now disappeared, my description is incorrect. Of course, we *might* decide to use language in such a way as to *make* it correct: but at present we are not so using it. (I know that what I have just said may be denied: it may be said that even in this case we cannot speak of one description as being incorrect and of another as being correct. But this seems to me to be a mistake: it seems to me clear that our *present* use of language is such that the above description *is* incorrect, and that another one, which we all know, *is* correct.)

But the description of our imaginary situation, though in some ways the situation is similar to those others, has *not* been provided for by our present use of language; indeed, why should it have been provided for? Such a situation has never happened; and if it did happen, and happened frequently, our experiences would be so revolutionized that we should find our present linguistic conventions entirely inadequate.<sup>1</sup>

However, the point is that no matter in what way we should then choose to describe our experiences, we cannot say *now*, that is, using our *present* conventions, that one description would be right and another wrong. For our *present* conventions do not determine how such experiences should be described.

But yet we somehow feel that, if our situation did occur, we *should* withdraw, or at least become doubtful about, our "desk proposition", but should not withdraw, or become doubtful about, our evidential propositions. I said that this is so because our imaginary situation *resembles* those in which we do withdraw

<sup>1</sup> Of course, we *could* preserve them if we wanted to, but it would be much more convenient to change them.



the material-object proposition but not the sense-datum propositions. But there is yet more to it. I said that our present use of language does not determine how we should describe our imaginary situation, and that therefore no description of it can be said to be right or wrong, correct or incorrect. Hence, that it is neither right nor wrong, neither correct nor incorrect, to claim that my evidential propositions entail the "desk proposition", and neither right nor wrong, neither correct nor incorrect, to claim that they do not entail it. But though this is so, yet it is clear that one description may be more *natural* than another. One description may be a more natural *continuation* of our present use of language than another description. If our situation occurred and we wanted to describe it, we should have, so to speak, to make a further move in the game: now, the game being what it is, this further move, whatever it may be, cannot be said to be either a right one or a wrong one—it simply doesn't belong to the game. But yet it may be *more or less* in conformity with the previous moves—with the moves which do belong to the game. And if it is very much in conformity with the old moves, if we feel it very natural to make it, we may easily fail to realize that it is a new move, and that we are playing a new game—or at least an *extension* of the old.

But here there is another complication, one which is not, I think, clearly realized even by those who would agree with what I have said hitherto. Suppose that this further move is *very much* in conformity with the old ones, that it appears *very* natural to make it, and that all the alternative moves which are possible are entirely *out* of conformity with the old ones. Can it then still be said that this further move is a new one, that it does not belong to the original game? Or is it the case that it is neither correct to say that it does, nor that it does not? I think two considerations are relevant here: the game may be *strictly* defined; that is to say, the rules of the game may be entirely fixed. In this case it is clear that any move of the sort we are considering—a move not on the list of the allowed moves, which *ex hypothesi* is exhaustive—would be a new move, however much it may conform to the old ones. But in the case we have been discussing the rules of the game are not fixed in this way: our language is not a game with strictly defined rules. Here, however, the second consideration comes in. Whether it is right to say that a further move is a new one and does not belong to the present game, or whether it is neither right nor wrong to say this, depends, I think, on *how* naturally the move "follows" from the present rules; and this itself depends on

the nature of the move. Let me explain this. Take our own case. The situation I gave, though it resembles some familiar ones, is yet widely removed from them. And therefore, though one description of it may seem more natural, more in conformity with our *present* ways of describing certain phenomena than another description, yet it seems to me that there is such a break of continuity between this situation and those others, that it is correct to say that any description of it constitutes a departure from our present language, and that hence any such description is neither correct nor incorrect. Though I should admit that this is a "question of degree", and that in some similar cases—those in which the break of continuity is not so great—the answer may be not that any description of such a case is a departure from our language, is a new move, but that it is neither right nor wrong to say that it is, and neither right nor wrong to say that it is not.

Now, before I proceed any further, let us summarize the position very briefly. I claim that it is definitely wrong to suppose that by merely imagining a certain situation (*e.g.* the one I described) I have given any reason for the view that my evidential propositions do (or do not) entail the "desk proposition". In other words, I maintain that it is definitely wrong to claim that it is logically possible that my evidence should be what it is, and yet that there should be no desk in the room, *on the ground* that I can imagine the situation I have just given. That is to say, I maintain that the mere fact that we can imagine such a situation is, by itself, no reason whatever for saying that (4) is not self-contradictory. I claim that what is relevant to the question whether my evidential propositions entail the "desk proposition" is how we should *describe* such a situation, and *not* the mere fact that we can *imagine* it. And I claim that by merely imagining the situation we are not answering this.

All this is my first claim; and I have tried, at considerable length, both to explain and to support it.

I am then claiming that if we do consider how we should describe such a situation, we shall see that we simply don't know: that we could describe it in several ways, but which of them we should in fact choose, we cannot tell. And further, that none of these ways can be said to be right and none wrong. This, of course, amounts to claiming that it is *neither right nor wrong* to suppose that my evidential propositions entail the "desk proposition": for it would be right to say this only if a certain one of the possible ways of describing our situation were right, and it would be wrong to say this only if a certain

other of these ways were right—while in fact neither is right, though neither is wrong.

All this is my second claim ; and again, I have tried, at considerable length, both to explain and to support it ; and I have also tried to bring out the connexions between my two claims—I have tried to show how certain things which may prevent a philosopher from seeing the truth of the one are connected with those which may prevent him from seeing the truth of the other.

I think this should all be clear by now ; but perhaps I might make it clearer still by representing my two claims schematically, in the following way. There are two propositions which I have considered ; the first is a proposition of the form : (A) "*p* is relevant to whether *q* and *r* entail *s*", and the second is of the form : (B) "*q* and *r* entail *s*". I claimed that (A) is wrong ; that *p* is not relevant to (B), that what is relevant to (B) is not *p* but something else, *p'*. And with regard to (B) I claimed that it is *neither right nor wrong*, neither correct nor incorrect. Getting rid of the variables, (A) is "The fact that I can imagine our situation is relevant to whether my evidential propositions entail the 'desk proposition'", and (B) is "My evidential propositions entail the 'desk proposition'". Finally, *p'* is "The way people would describe our situation". I think all this is now made as clear as it can be.

But there is one point which still remains. I said that (A) is definitely wrong ; that the mere fact that I can imagine our situation is by itself no reason at all against (B), that it is just irrelevant to (B). It may be said, however, that (A), like (B), is also *neither right nor wrong* : that it is neither right nor wrong to say that the mere fact that I can imagine our situation is irrelevant to (B). Now, it seems to me that this resembles one of the points I have discussed already, namely, whether it is correct to say that any description of our situation constitutes a departure from our language, or whether to say this is neither correct nor incorrect. For I said that why we are tempted to suppose that by imagining our situation we have already settled how people would describe it, is because our situation resembles those with which we are fairly familiar ; that is, that our situation resembles those the descriptions of which are provided for in our language. Now, in the case of the latter situations (*e.g.* in the case of an hallucination) it is correct to say that by merely imagining them we have already settled how people would describe them. I think that even here to say this may be *misleading* : for it may make us forget that why this is so is simply because the descriptions of these situations are already a part

of our language, and not because of some mysterious relation of "meaning-giving", which has nothing to do with how words are actually used, and in virtue of which if we can imagine *S* we are already giving meaning to *S*, are already saying how *S* would be described. But though to say this may be misleading, it is yet obviously correct: for when the description of a situation is already a part of our language (*i.e.* when our language determines which description of it is right and which is wrong), then by imagining such a situation we *have* already provided its description, we *have* already settled how people would describe it; for then our image, our picture, is itself a part of the game. (This will appear quite obvious, and indeed tautologous, if we suppose that our picture is a verbal one: for then the verbal expressions by means of which we are picturing our situation are just the expressions which are ordinarily employed to picture it—this is just their rôle in our language. So we *could* not "verbally imagine" this situation without thereby saying how it would be described.) When I have given it, I needn't go on to ask, "How would people describe it?" And not only I *needn't* do this, but to do this would be meaningless: it would be like saying, "John left Cambridge yesterday", and then asking, "How should we express in our language that John left Cambridge yesterday by using the words 'John left Cambridge yesterday'?"

Of course, I can give you our picture and then ask, "How would people describe it in some other language, or in our own language but in different words?" Just as I may say, "John left Cambridge yesterday", and then ask, "How should we express in our language that John left Cambridge yesterday, but by using different words, or how should we express this in some other language?" And this, of course, would be perfectly meaningful. And notice here that the analogy between this case and our own—between "John left Cambridge yesterday" and our picture of an unusual but not unknown situation<sup>1</sup>—is even closer than it may appear at first sight: for our picture is itself a *verbal* picture, it is itself just a sentence or a sequence of sentences. In fact, the cases are absolutely analogous, except that the first is a "picture" of a perfectly familiar situation, while the second is a "picture" of a somewhat unusual one. Now, our original imaginary situation (the "desk situation") resembles such somewhat unusual ones, though it also differs from them. Hence, should we perhaps say that it is *neither* correct *nor* incorrect to claim that by merely imagining

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* an hallucination.

it we have already answered how people would describe it? I think not, because it seems to me that there is such a *gap* of continuity between these *somewhat* unusual cases and our own case that it is incorrect to claim that by imagining our case we have already answered how people would describe it. In other words, I think that (A) is *incorrect*, and not *neither correct nor incorrect*. Though I should admit that this is a "question of degree" and that in some similar cases—those in which the break of continuity is not so great as in our own—the answer may well be "neither-nor".

Now, let us go back to where we started from. We were considering the proposition which on page 294 I called (4): "I have all the evidence which I do have for saying that there is a desk in my rooms, but there is no desk in my rooms". Now, if what Mr. Ayer said about the case of dreams were applied to the case of the relation between the evidential propositions and the "desk proposition" (as it was clearly meant to be applied), it would imply that (4) is not self-contradictory. But as I said previously, it would imply *more*: it would imply that the proposition which on page 292 I called (3) is also not self-contradictory. This proposition is, "I have all the evidence which I do have that there is a desk in my rooms, *and however many tests I may make in the future they will all confirm this evidence*, but there is no desk in my rooms". And my reason for claiming that what Mr. Ayer said about the case of dreams implies that (4) is not self-contradictory is precisely that what he said about the case of dreams implies that (3) is not self-contradictory; and if (3) is not self-contradictory it follows that (4) is not self-contradictory.<sup>1</sup>

But we have now seen that it is not correct to say that (4) is not self-contradictory, though it is also not correct to say that (4) *is* self-contradictory: we have seen that it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that (4) is *not* self-contradictory, and that it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that (4) *is* self-contradictory. What is the bearing of this on the claim that (3) is not self-contradictory? I said that to discuss (4) "will be good enough for our purpose, at least to begin with". Why I said this is because if it is not correct to say that (4) is not self-contradictory, it follows that it cannot be correct to say that (3) is not self-contradictory. For to say that (3) is not self-contradictory

<sup>1</sup> Though, if (3) is self-contradictory, it does not follow that (4) is also self-contradictory. On the other hand, if (4) is *not* self-contradictory it does not follow that (3) is not self-contradictory, but if (4) *is* self-contradictory it does follow that (3) is self-contradictory.

means that it is not self-contradictory to suppose that I should have all my *present* evidence that there is a desk in my rooms, and that however many further tests I may make in the future they will all confirm this evidence, but that yet there should be no desk in my rooms; and to say that (4) is not self-contradictory means merely that it is not self-contradictory to suppose that I should have all my *present* evidence that there is a desk in my rooms, and that yet there should be no desk in my rooms. And clearly if it is not correct to say of the second that it is not self-contradictory, it cannot be correct to say of the first that it is not self-contradictory. This much is plain. But it might be the case that though it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that (4) is not self-contradictory, yet it is correct to say that (3) is self-contradictory, and incorrect to say that it is not self-contradictory. In other words, if it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that (4) is not self-contradictory, there remain two possibilities: (a) that it is also neither correct nor incorrect to say that (3) is not self-contradictory; and (b) that it is correct to say that (3) is self-contradictory and incorrect to say that it is not self-contradictory. The possibility which is ruled out is (c) that it is correct to say that (3) is not self-contradictory. That is to say, the possibility which as a result of our discussion is ruled out is just the one which Mr. Ayer has chosen to adopt.

Now, is (a) or (b) the correct answer? At first sight it may seem that what I said about (4) implies that (a) is the correct answer. I do not mean by this that from "It is neither correct nor incorrect that (4) is self-contradictory" it logically follows that it is neither correct nor incorrect that (3) is self-contradictory, but that my reasons for saying the former would also seem to be reasons for saying the latter.

But yet I do not think that (a) is the correct answer, nor that (b) is: for I think that (3) differs from (4) in a much more fundamental way than what I have just said about their relationship would imply. I think the difference is this. The truth of the claim that (4) is not self-contradictory we can *test*: we can imagine a concrete situation and then consider what is its correct description. If we find that one particular description is correct, the answer will be that (4) is not self-contradictory; if we find that another particular description is correct, the answer will be that (4) is self-contradictory. And if we find, and this is what I should claim we did find, that of *none* of the possible descriptions can we say that it is correct or incorrect, the answer will be that it is neither correct that (4) is self-contradictory, nor correct that it is not. But how could we test the truth of



the claim that (3) is not self-contradictory? It is obvious that we could give *no* example which would test it, for however many evidential propositions we assume to be true, our case will always illustrate (4), or something like (4), but never (3), since however many evidential propositions we take, it will be said that we can take more; and if we took more, that there are yet more; and so on. In other words, in order that a man should be provided with a situation answering to the requirements of (3),<sup>1</sup> it won't do to suppose merely that he knows a number—however large—of “uniformly positive” evidential propositions; it is also necessary to suppose that he knows a proposition with regard to a *class* of propositions: that he knows that *all* his evidential propositions will be “uniformly positive”. And this amounts to saying that it is impossible (logically) to describe a case which satisfies the following two conditions: ( $\alpha$ ) that it is a case in which a man is provided with a situation answering to the requirement of the second part of (3), and ( $\beta$ ) that it is a case which is relevant to whether (3) is self-contradictory. For in order that a case should satisfy ( $\beta$ ) we have to suppose that the man *may* get some evidence which is *prima facie* negative; and in order that a case should satisfy ( $\alpha$ ) we have to suppose that the man knows that *all* his evidence will be positive. So that if ( $\alpha$ ) is satisfied it follows that ( $\beta$ ) is not, and *vice versa*. What, therefore, is the answer to whether (3) is self-contradictory? It seems to me that we cannot say either “It is correct that (3) is self-contradictory”, or “It is incorrect that (3) is self-contradictory”, or “It is neither correct nor incorrect that (3) is self-contradictory”; what we should say is that the question cannot be answered. Meaning by this *not* that the question *has* an answer, only we do not know what it is, but that there *is* no answer to it: for it is not that by considering some situations we might get an answer, only we do not know what sort of situation to consider, but that we know that there are not, and cannot be, any such situations.

Let us now go back to the case of dreams. It will be recalled that before discussing (4) and (3) we were concerned with the proposition which on page 289 I called (1). “I have all the evidence which I do have for saying that I am not now dreaming,

<sup>1</sup> That is, to the requirement of the second part of (3): “(I) I have all the evidence which I do have that there is a desk in my rooms, (II) and however many tests I may make in the future they will all confirm this evidence, (III) but there is no desk in my rooms”.

and however many tests I may make in the future they will all confirm this evidence, but I am now dreaming." I said that before answering whether (1) is or is not self-contradictory it will be convenient to ask the same question with regard to (3): and then that before doing this, we should ask the question with regard to (4). This way of discussing the problem may seem very complicated; but the problem is very complicated, and if we want to discuss it satisfactorily, we cannot use any short cuts.

Now, we must notice that there is yet another proposition, call it (5), which is related to (1) in the sort of way that (4) is related to (3). (5) is "I have all the evidence which I do have that I am not dreaming now, but I am dreaming now". Now, are there any differences between (4) and (3) on the one hand, and (5) and (1) on the other hand? In other words, is (5) just like (4) and (1) just like (3), or do (5) and (1) possess some peculiarities which (4) and (3) lack? Of course, (5) and (1) would differ from (4) and (3) if we supposed that "I am dreaming now" is itself self-contradictory, while "There is no desk in my rooms" is not. But I am assuming, what seems to me to be true, that "I am dreaming now", by itself, is not self-contradictory. But yet it seems to me that (5) and (1) do differ, in an important respect, from (4) and (3). Let us take (4) and (5). The question whether (4) is self-contradictory can be expressed by asking: (A) "Can we say that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of the 'desk proposition', we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of the propositions which were my evidence for it?" But now let us see what happens if we try to do the same with (5). In other words, suppose that we try to express the question, "Is (5) self-contradictory?" by asking (B) "Can we say that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of the proposition 'I am not dreaming now' (expressed by me at  $t$ ), we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of the evidential propositions which I had had at  $t$ ?" Obviously the answer to (B) will be entirely different from the answer to (A).

According to me, the answer to (A) is "We can neither say that it is the case that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of the 'desk proposition' we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of the propositions which were my evidence for it, nor that it is *not* the case that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of the 'desk proposition' we should also regard it

as adversely relevant to the truth of the propositions which were my evidence for it".

But now, is it not clear that should we say that any evidence is adversely relevant to the truth of the proposition "I am not dreaming now" (expressed by me at  $t$ ), we should also say that it is adversely relevant to the truth of the evidential propositions which I had had at  $t$ ? For surely these evidential propositions are of the sort: "What I am seeing is a real desk", "What I am seeing is a real pen", etc. Or, "This is a real desk", "That is a real pen", etc. In other words, the evidential propositions for "I am not dreaming now" are themselves propositions which entail the existence of material objects: so that if any evidence is adversely relevant to the truth of the proposition "I am not dreaming now", it is also adversely relevant to the truth of these evidential propositions. That is, any evidence which would throw doubt on the truth of the proposition "I am not dreaming now" (expressed by me at  $t$ ) would also throw doubt on the truth of the evidential propositions which I had had at  $t$ . Surely this is so? If any evidence would make me think that perhaps I was dreaming at  $t$ , it would also, in an equal degree, make me think that perhaps what I saw was not a real desk, not a real pen, not a real chair.

I do not think, for reasons I gave in discussing (4), that it is possible to describe any evidence of which we could say that, if we got it, we *should* regard it as throwing some doubt on the truth of the proposition "I am not dreaming now". But it seems to me perfectly obvious that if we did so regard it, we should also regard it as throwing some doubt on the truth of the propositions which were the evidence for the original proposition.

In other words, while the answer to (A) is that we can neither say that it is the case that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of the "desk proposition" we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of its evidential propositions, nor that this is *not* the case; the answer to (B) is that we can certainly say that it is the case that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of the proposition "I am not dreaming now", we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of the propositions which were my evidence for the proposition "I am not dreaming now".

Now, does this show that, unlike (4), (5) is self-contradictory? I do not think it does. I think that what it shows is that the relation between the proposition "I am not dreaming now" and its evidential propositions is different from the relation

between the proposition "There is a desk in my rooms" and its evidential propositions; in other words, it shows that the question, "Is (5) self-contradictory?", is not, as it seems to be at first sight, like the question, "Is (4) self-contradictory?". It shows that when we are asking, "Is (5) self-contradictory?", we are not asking, as we *are* when we ask if (4) is self-contradictory, "Can my evidential propositions be true and yet the proposition which is supported by them false?". What then are we asking? I think what we are asking can only be expressed by saying that our question is, "Can the evidential propositions which I have for saying 'I am not dreaming now' *themselves* be false?". That is to say, what we are asking is not, as in the case of (4), whether it is possible that the "supporting" propositions should be true and yet that the "supported" proposition should be false, but whether it is possible that the "supporting" propositions themselves should be false. In other words, what I want to claim is that (5) really stands for a whole *class* of propositions: a class which contains (4) and other propositions like (4). And therefore to ask if (5) is self-contradictory is to ask, with regard to a whole class of propositions ((4) and propositions like (4)), whether its members are self-contradictory. Let me explain this. What does it mean to ask if it is possible that the evidential propositions for "I am not dreaming now" should be false? Clearly it means: ( $\alpha$ ) "Is it possible that though I should have all the evidence which I do have that what I am seeing is a real table, yet it should not be a real table?" And: ( $\beta$ ) "Is it possible that though I should have all the evidence which I do have that what I am seeing is a real pen, yet it should not be a real pen?", etc. In other words, to ask if (5) is self-contradictory is to ask if ( $\alpha'$ ) "I have all the evidence which I do have that what I am seeing is a real table, but it isn't", ( $\beta'$ ) "I have all the evidence which I do have that what I am seeing is a real pen, but it isn't", etc., are self-contradictory. Now ( $\alpha'$ ) and ( $\beta'$ ) are propositions *like* (4): and to ask if (5) is self-contradictory is to ask if these propositions, and other similar propositions, are self-contradictory. So that if it is true that (4) and propositions like (4) are self-contradictory, it will follow that the proposition " (5) is self-contradictory ", which says that a proposition which stands for all these propositions is self-contradictory, is also true; in other words, if (4) and propositions like (4) are self-contradictory, it will follow that (5), which stands for all these propositions, is also self-contradictory. And if (4) and propositions like (4)<sup>1</sup> are not self-contradictory, it

<sup>1</sup> Like (4), in the way that ( $\alpha'$ ) and ( $\beta'$ ) are like (4).

will follow that (5) is also not self-contradictory; and finally, if it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that (4) and propositions like (4) are self-contradictory, it will follow that it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that (5) is self-contradictory. In other words, the answer to the question whether (5) is self-contradictory will follow from the answer to the question whether (4) and propositions like (4) are self-contradictory. Not because (5) is just like (4), but because (5) stands for a class of propositions which contains (4) and other propositions like (4).

Now, it may be said that if this is so, and since the number of propositions *like* (4) for which, as I say, (5) "stands", is indefinite, we can never know whether (5) is self-contradictory, or whether (5) is not self-contradictory, or whether it is neither correct, nor incorrect to say that (5) is self-contradictory. For, in order to know this, we should have to know whether *all* propositions like (4) are self-contradictory. And their number is indefinite. But the point is, of course, that if we know the answer to whether (4) is self-contradictory, we also know the answer to whether all propositions *like* (4) are self-contradictory, since it is obvious that, in this respect, all these propositions are exactly analogous.

And the same considerations apply also to (1) and (3): the answer to whether (1) is self-contradictory will follow from the answer to whether (3) and propositions like (3) are self-contradictory. Not because (1) is just like (3), but because to ask if (1) is or is not self-contradictory is to ask if the propositions belonging to a class which contains (3) and other propositions like (3) are or are not self-contradictory.

Had I been wiser I should have left the matter at this point. But I must confess that I am still greatly puzzled, and I am afraid probably very confused, about one of the things I have said in the course of this paper, and I should like to say more about it. It concerns what on page 301 I called "my second claim": the claim that it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that the proposition (4) is self-contradictory; in other words, that it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that my evidential propositions entail the "desk proposition". The reason which I gave for it was this. It seems to me that we can neither say that it is the case that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of the "desk proposition" we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of my evidential propositions, nor that this is *not* the case. Now, does this really show that my claim is right? To say that it

does, amounts to holding that we can say that the proposition " $p$  and not- $q$ " is not self-contradictory if and only if we can say that it is not the case that if we regarded any evidence as adversely relevant to the truth of  $q$ , we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $p$ . In other words, it amounts to holding that we can say that the proposition " $p$  and not- $q$ " is not self-contradictory if and only if we can say of some evidence that even if we did regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $q$ , we should yet *not* regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $p$ . Let us call this view (A). Now, if (A) is right, and if I am also right in holding, (B), that in the case of (4) we can neither say of any evidence that if we regarded it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $q$  we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $p$ , nor that if we regarded it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $q$  we should *not* also regard it adversely relevant to the truth of  $p$ —it will follow that I am right in holding that we cannot say that (4) is not self-contradictory, and also, of course, that I am right in holding that we cannot say that (4) is self-contradictory. (For, according to me, we can say that the proposition " $p$  and not- $q$ " is self-contradictory if and only if we can say of any evidence that if we regarded it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $q$  we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of  $p$ .) In other words, it will follow that we can neither say that (4) is not self-contradictory, nor that it is self-contradictory: that it is not correct to say the one thing and not correct to say the other; from which, in this case, it follows that it is also not *incorrect* to say the one thing and not *incorrect* to say the other. For it would be incorrect to say that (4) is not self-contradictory only if it were correct to say that (4) is self-contradictory, and it would be incorrect to say that (4) is self-contradictory only if it were correct to say that (4) is not self-contradictory. And it is not correct to say either.

Now, I do think that I am right in holding (B); in other words, that I am right in holding that we can *neither* say of any evidence that if we regarded it as adversely relevant to the truth of the "desk proposition" we should also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of my evidential propositions, *nor* that if we regarded it as adversely relevant to the truth of the "desk proposition" we should not also regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of my evidential propositions. But though I think I am certainly right in holding (B) (and I think that I have shown that (B) is right in my discussion of the imaginary case which I have described (pp. 294 ff.)), does it follow that I am



also right in holding that it is neither correct nor incorrect to say that (4) is self-contradictory, and neither correct nor incorrect to say that it is not? In other words, does it follow that "my second claim" is right? As I said, this will follow if I am also right in holding (A). But am I right in doing so? This is exactly what I am puzzled about. For it appears to me that I *may* be wrong in holding (A). It will be remembered that I said that we do not know at all what we should say if our imaginary situation really occurred. But I also said that one of the things we *might* say is, "So there wasn't a desk here after all—we were all victims of a long and very consistent hallucination". Now, we needn't really suppose that we might say anything as "strong" as this: it will be enough to suppose that one of the things we *might* say is, "So *perhaps* we had all been deluded and there wasn't a desk here after all"; or, better still, all we need to suppose is that one of the things we *might* do is to regard our new evidence as relevant to the truth of the "desk proposition", but not to the truth of the original evidential propositions. It seems to me that we *must* say that this is one of the things we might possibly do. I do not think that we can say that this is what we *should* in fact do, or that, if we did, we should be either right or wrong; but I do not see how I can deny that we *might* possibly do this. But now, it may be said that if I admit this, I am thereby admitting that (4) is *not* self-contradictory; for it may be said that this is all that is required to show that "*p* and not-*q*" is not self-contradictory. In other words, it may be said that (A) is wrong in that it takes what is a *sufficient* condition for our saying that the proposition "*p* and not-*q*" is not self-contradictory to be both sufficient and necessary. It may be said that what is both sufficient and necessary is given by (A 1): We can say that the proposition "*p* and not-*q*" is not self-contradictory if and only if we can say of some evidence that even if we did regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of *q*, yet we *might* not regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of *p*. Now, is (A) right or is (A 1) right? This is just what I feel very puzzled about. This may appear surprising for the question would seem to be a purely "logical" one: and yet I do not know how to answer it; at least I do not know how to answer it clearly. But I shall venture to say this. Perhaps it doesn't really matter whether we say that (A) is right or that (A 1) is right. For (A 1), though it seems very clear and simple, conceals, I think, a great complexity. Let me explain what I mean by this. When we say that we *might* not regard some evidence as adversely relevant

to  $p$  even if we regarded it as adversely relevant to  $q$ , we may say this in many different ways. We may say this with very little confidence indeed, that is, with very great hesitation: for we may think that though this is *just* possible, yet it is extremely unlikely, and we may think it far more likely that in fact we should adopt one of the other possibilities. In other words, our "might" may be a very weak "might". On the other hand, our "might" may be very strong: it may be the case that though we are not certain that this is what we should in fact say, yet this possibility seems to us extremely likely, and we should be prepared to "back" it very strongly, much more strongly than any other possibility. And between these two extreme cases there would be intermediate ones, where our "might", though not very weak, would not be very strong. That is, our "mights" could be arranged in a series in which they would gradually approach to "should". And perhaps whether the fact that we *might* not regard some evidence as adversely relevant to  $p$  even if we regarded it as adversely relevant to  $q$ , does or does not show that " $p$  and not- $q$ " is not self-contradictory, depends on the sort of "might" our "might" is. In other words, perhaps it is the case that we can definitely say that this fact shows that " $p$  and not- $q$ " is not self-contradictory only if the "might" is so strong that it almost vanishes into "should"; while if the "might" is at its weakest we can definitely say that this fact does not show that " $p$  and not- $q$ " is not self-contradictory. And when the "might" is intermediate there will be hesitation whether we can say that this fact shows that " $p$  and not- $q$ " is not self-contradictory, a hesitation which will gradually diminish as the "might" gradually approaches to "should".

Now, if this were so, how would it affect my claim that it is neither correct to say that (4) is self-contradictory, nor that it is not? I do not think that it would show my claim to be wrong. For I think that the "might" in the case of (4), though indeed it is not at its weakest, is yet very far from "should": so that the fact that we can say of our new evidence "we might not regard it as adversely relevant to the truth of our old evidential propositions even if we regarded it as adversely relevant to the truth of the 'desk proposition'", would not show that (4) is not self-contradictory. But at the same time, if what I have said about "might" and "should" is right, it shows that the question whether " $p$  and not- $q$ " is not self-contradictory is even more complicated than would seem from the way I had presented it, and that in some cases (that is, for

some values of  $p$  and  $q$ ) there will be hesitation not merely as to whether we can say that " $p$  and not- $q$ " is *not* self-contradictory or that it is self-contradictory, but also as to whether we can say that neither supposition is correct or incorrect. For in some cases it will be so *nearly* correct that " $p$  and not- $q$ " is *not* self-contradictory and so *nearly* incorrect that it is self-contradictory that we should hesitate to say that both these statements are neither correct nor incorrect.

certain motive. The fact that this view is already championed by Ross makes it unnecessary to state that it has great influence and prestige in contemporary ethics. But what is perhaps not so obvious and easily recognized is how practically important the theory is. We must seriously raise against the mainstream of ethics that in denying that motive can be any part of the content of duty, those who hold these views detach motive from the sphere of morality altogether; for they normally also explicitly hold that nothing from certain motives possesses moral value, and this is quite as important and as seriously wrong as stating that any proposition about obligation. Now must we not admit that this is the right of the last Ross proposition that we have just seen may have some effect on my future motives, and that this fact will move its due weight in the weighing whether the act in question is best and how my duty? But the last proposition that a negative statement is made about motive—what is of the utmost importance. For clearly if in any situation I have some choice between two acts, this is equivalent to saying that I have some responsibility which would be demanded of me on moral grounds. I have explicitly discharged all the obligations resting upon me, and in one can legitimately reproach me for my conduct. Now if the view under consideration be true, I can object that in every situation by I cannot do what is the better of the two, so that I am, so long as I do that, not I can do some act and instantly make no other demands on me, but and not at least. This is not to commit to deny that there may be moral importance in not in the time, but that the act of a particular person which morality does not demand that I should have not act after in substance. On the other hand, if this view is not correct, then at least in some and perhaps in all situations I will have to be devoted to it in act—and look towards myself in a new way towards the source of the act in morality—of I can do so that I have discharged all my moral obligations, but still responsible. And finally all is to be said.

## II.—MOTIVE AND DUTY.

BY GEORGE E. HUGHES.

I wish to discuss the view that our duty is in every case simply to do a certain *act*, and never either to have a certain motive or to act from a certain motive or to do a certain act from a certain motive. The fact that this view is ardently championed by Ross makes it unnecessary to state that it has great influence and prestige in contemporary ethics. But what is perhaps not so obvious and widely recognised is how practically important the theory is. We must certainly guard against the misunderstanding that, in denying that motive can be any part of the content of duty, those who hold Ross's view banish motive from the sphere of morality altogether;<sup>1</sup> for they normally also explicitly hold that acting from certain motives possesses moral *value*, and this is quite as important and as genuinely *moral* a statement as any proposition about obligation. Nor must we lose sight of the fact that Ross recognises that an act which I do now may have some effect on my future motives, and that this fact will have its due weight in determining whether the act in question is here and now my duty. But the fact remains that a negative statement is made about motives which is of the utmost importance. For clearly if in any situation I have completely fulfilled my duty, this is equivalent to saying that I have done everything which could be demanded of me on moral grounds; I have completely discharged all the obligations resting upon me, and no one can legitimately reproach me for my conduct. Now if the view under consideration be true, I can achieve this in every situation by a certain act alone, *be the motive of that act what it may*; so long as I do that act, I can be quite sure that morality makes no other demands on me, here and now at least. This is not, of course, to deny that there may be many imperfections in me at the time, but they are *ex hypothesi* imperfections which morality does not demand that I should here and now alter or eradicate. On the other hand, if this view is not correct, then at least in some and perhaps in all situations I shall have to look beyond a mere act—and look inwards towards the motive, towards the source of the act in myself—if I wish to be sure that I have discharged all my moral obligations and acted irreproachably. And plainly this is no trivial issue.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Taylor (in an article in *MIND*, July 1939) seems to me to fall into this misunderstanding.

I propose in this paper to do two things :

- I. To examine the main arguments which are advanced in favour of the view that the content of duty is always limited to the doing of a certain act. I shall come to the conclusion that they are unsatisfactory.
- II. After that to raise the positive question of what grounds there may be for holding that motive may constitute an element in what is our duty.

### I.

(A) Much the most important argument which is commonly advanced to prove that our duty must always be simply to do a certain act is that based on the Kantian principle that "ought implies can". It is argued : "It is not the case that I can by choice produce a certain motive . . . in myself at a moment's notice, still less that I can at a moment's notice make it effective in stimulating me to act. I can act from a certain motive only if I have the motive. My *present* duty, therefore, cannot be to act here and now from it."<sup>1</sup> Now the Kantian principle referred to (which might be more explicitly formulated as stating that only that which is here and now in the control of my will can be here and now my duty) I fully admit to be a valid and most important one ; and if the psychological premise (*viz.* that to act from a certain motive is never within the control of my will) were to be accepted, I should regard the conclusion of the argument as quite inevitable. But in fact this psychological premise seems to me to be a highly questionable one, and I am surprised at the facile way in which it is often asserted (and, be it added, denied, by the opposite school of thought). If it were to turn out that, even on rare occasions, I could "by choice produce a certain motive", or if, on examination, what was involved in willing to act from a certain motive were found to be something different from the process of creating a motive by an act of will and then setting it into operation to produce an act, then clearly the proposition that it can never be my duty to act from a certain motive would not follow from the principle that "ought implies can".

In order to decide this matter we shall have to answer the two related questions : What is a motive ? and What is it that we do when we *will* ? We shall, in fact, have to try to clarify the relation between the three terms, *motive*, *act* and *willing*, which seem to be involved in every deliberately performed action.

<sup>1</sup> Ross, *The Right and the Good*, p. 5.

What is a motive?

It is first of all important to distinguish between two senses which this question may bear:

(a) We may be asking: what kinds of things can be motives? I do not wish to discuss this question in detail, as that would be irrelevant to my main purpose. It is not difficult, however, to return a rough preliminary answer to it: certain desires, emotions, beliefs, or combinations of these<sup>1</sup> can be the motives of human actions.

(b) But the question may also mean: what is the relation between such a desire, emotion or belief and an act, in virtue of which we call it the motive of that act? What is it to act *from* a certain desire, emotion or belief? And this is the question which I now wish to discuss.

A simple answer immediately suggests itself. The relation, it may be said, is simply that of *efficient causation*. To say that the motive of act X is A is simply to say that A causes X.

Now I do not wish to deny that the term motive is sometimes used in this sense. I do not wish to deny that there occur cases in which, *e.g.* I experience a sudden feeling of terror which *causes* me to turn on my heels and run, or a strong impulse of pity which causes me to bring help to someone in distress. In such cases I think it is quite idiomatic to speak of the terror or the pity which I experience as the motive of my act. But what seems quite clear is that those cases in which my motive is simply the efficient cause of my act are not cases of fully deliberate or *willed* action. And since, fortunately, it is common ground to both parties in the dispute that it is only that which I can will which can be my duty, we can confine our attention to the relation between motive and act in the case of deliberate action.

In the case of a fully deliberate act, or an act which we *will*, it seems more appropriate to speak of the motive as the *reason* for the act, or as our reason for acting, than as the cause of the act. Now there is this important difference between being a cause of an act and being a reason for an act: that the first appears to be a *dyadic* relation—*i.e.* it states a relation between two terms, a desire (or whatever is the motive) and the act which it causes; whereas the second appears to be a *triadic* relation—*i.e.* the desire is in this case not simply the reason for the act, it is *my* reason for acting: it indicates that there is a third term (*viz.* a conscious self) which enters into the process and makes the desire a reason for acting. One might say, a desire can be a *cause* without my help, but it takes *me* to make it a *reason*.

<sup>1</sup> Ross, *e.g.* holds that a motive always consists of a desire plus a belief.



How do I make such a desire, emotion or belief a *reason*? What happens seems to me to be briefly as follows:

If I introspect before acting, I am aware, not merely of a number of possible acts open to me, but of a number of desires, emotions and beliefs which "point towards" the doing of certain acts, in the sense in which fear may point towards flight, desire for gain towards selling a certain article, or the belief that a certain act is morally right towards doing that act. I propose to call such desires, emotions and beliefs "potential motives", reserving the term "actual motive" or simply "motive" for a desire, emotion or belief from which I do in fact act; in this way a good deal of verbal clumsiness and confusion will be avoided. These potential motives are of varying strengths, but the presence of each of them sets up in me a tendency to do the act towards which it points. Sometimes one potential motive is so strong that no effort which I can make can prevent it issuing in action; but then we have an involuntary act, and this is a case of efficient causation, such as I have previously described: in common phrase, I am "carried away by an emotion". In other cases this is not so, and then any one of a number of potential motives can become my reason for acting—though, as I have previously said, none can become so unless I *make* it my reason. In order to make a potential motive my reason for acting I select it from the others and "adopt" or "sanction" or "recognise" it; and in so doing I confer upon it an entirely new status: for it ceases to be merely an object of introspection "which comes up for consideration", and becomes, for the moment at least, part of what I *accept*—or, in one phrase, what I "identify myself with". There is a great difference in status between say a desire which, although I am aware of it as *my* desire, I am "considering"—i.e. deliberating whether to accept or reject—and a desire which I have accepted or recognised and made the basis of my acting. This sanctioning or accepting of a potential motive may be in some cases the actual doing of the act towards which it points—but the doing of it *as* an expression or fulfilment of that potential motive; in other cases it may not, but it seems at least to involve the *decision* to do that act, though perhaps at a future date. When a potential motive is thus accepted and the act is performed, the potential motive becomes the *actual* motive of that deliberate act.

If this account is substantially correct, important consequences follow about the nature of willing. For what I will is then not simply to do a certain act; what I will is to sanction a certain potential motive by "giving it its act", or by deciding

to give it its act; or to do a certain act as a fulfilment of a certain potential motive, which I regard as "justifying" the act (not, of course, in the *moral* sense, but in the sense that it is what I now accept as the basis of that act). An act of will appears to me to be essentially of this nature. It is true that I may, before acting, survey the acts open to me without thought of motive, but I do not in fact do any of them, at least deliberately, unless I have some potential motive of which it is the expression or fulfilment. And it is my doing of the act as such an expression or fulfilment which makes the potential motive thus accepted the *actual* motive of my act.

There is one objection to this view which it will be convenient to deal with here. On my view, it will be said, we should expect to be always aware of the motives from which we act. Yet, as is well known, when we ask ourselves from what motives we acted on a certain occasion, a prolonged and difficult effort of introspection and self-analysis is often necessary before we can return a satisfactory answer. I have three remarks to make in reply to this objection: (a) If the act in question is an involuntary one, of which the motive is simply the efficient cause, there is clearly no difficulty on my theory in holding that we might not know what this efficient cause was. (b) In the case of voluntary action, it must be remembered that it is one of the most ineradicable tendencies of human beings to persuade themselves, even immediately after acting, that they have acted from motives which they believe to be higher than those from which in fact they did act. It is therefore not surprising that, even a short time after acting, I should have so thoroughly persuaded myself that my motive was B that it may require patient reflection, which is made all the more difficult because it is frequently humiliating and therefore painful, to discover that my motive was in fact A. But the fact that I believe that I can by an effort of memory discover that my motive was A seems to presuppose that at the time of acting I knew it was A. (c) In inquiring what was the motive of my act, I may, however, be asking, not whether I acted from A or from B, but what is the correct analysis of A, from which I know I acted. And clearly there is no contradiction in holding that I know I acted from A but that I do not know what is the correct analysis of A.

Our purpose in this discussion is to determine how far, and in what circumstances, it is within the control of our will to act from a certain motive. If the view I have outlined is correct,

then in every case in which I perform a fully deliberate act, my willing has *something* to do with my motive; but it does not follow from this that I can choose which motive I shall sanction in my act. I now wish to consider several different types of situation, which are necessarily simplified, but which will I hope indicate the answer I should return to this question.

It is frequently assumed that in order to will to act from a certain motive, I should first of all have to create a certain desire, emotion or belief by an act of will (*cf.* Ross's phrase, "it is not the case that I can by choice produce a certain motive . . . in myself at a moment's notice"). In some cases this would undoubtedly be the case, but not in all. In the first type of situation which I wish to consider it is not the case.

(a) Suppose I have two potential motives, A and B, actually present in me, pointing towards acts X and Y, respectively. Can I choose to act from A rather than from B? Clearly, in this case in order to do so I shall not have to *create* the potential motive in question, since it is already in existence. Now it is admitted that I can choose to do X or to do Y. But *ex hypothesi*, if I do X my motive will be A, while if I do Y my motive will be B. If, therefore, I choose to do X and not Y, I am thereby choosing to act from A rather than from B. In such a case it is difficult to see how I could choose an act without choosing a motive.

The other types of situation are not so simple, and in order to deal with them we shall have to raise the question whether in fact it is as impossible as it is often alleged to be, for me to alter my potential motives. I think there is reason to doubt this impossibility. I have described what I believe to be the process whereby a potential motive receives the sanction of the will in an act. This act can be either an outward change in the world around me, or else a mental act, effecting a change in my mind. In the latter case, is it possible that the act might consist in altering the pattern of my potential motives, either by the production of some new potential motive which might then become the motive of a further act, or by the strengthening of an already existent potential motive, or finally by the weakening or suppression of some potential motive so that another one may become the motive of my act? I cannot see any reason why this should not at least sometimes be the case.

Let us see how this would work out:

(b) The second type of situation which I wish to consider is this: Suppose I have as before two potential motives, A and B, but in this case they both point towards the same act, X;

if I do X, can I choose whether I shall do it from A or from B ? In this case it is not so clear that we can answer so confidently in the affirmative. But I am quite sure that on some occasions at least we can do so. Suppose I am a dentist and I have to perform a painful operation on a patient against whom I have a personal grudge. Then I have two potential motives : (i) my desire as a dentist to do what the case in hand requires ; and (ii) my desire to inflict pain without fear of retribution on a personal enemy ; and both point towards one and the same act, the performing of this particular operation. (In practice they would almost certainly point towards slightly different acts, the one minimising and the other maximising the pain involved ; but suppose the operation can be performed only in one precise way.) Can I, by an effort of will, perform the operation from the first motive only ? It seems to me that in some cases at least this is quite possible. It is true that the measures I take may have to be to some extent indirect. I may remind myself that my business as a dentist is to relieve suffering and should not be influenced by my personal likes and dislikes, or I may reflect that my second desire is an unworthy one of which I shall be ashamed afterwards. I fully admit that these reflections may not remove my desire to inflict pain on my patient, but to suggest that they never have *any* effect in this direction, or even that they never remove the desire altogether, seems to me to be clearly false.

The correct analysis of this situation appears to be as follows : Two acts are involved, X (the operation) and Y (my deliberate reflections and self-admonitions). I have at the outset two potential motives, A and B, both pointing towards X. But I can perform act Y (which of course will also have a motive, though this need not be discussed here) which, at least in some cases, considerably weakens or even destroys altogether potential motive B, so that when I do X my motive is A, not B.

(c) Suppose I have at a given moment only one, or one greatly predominant motive, A, pointing towards act X. Is it ever possible for me to do X not from A but from B ? I think that an argument similar to that contained in the last example will show that even this is sometimes possible, but on one condition, *viz.* that I am so constituted that I habitually experience B in situations similar to the present one, though I do not in fact experience it now. In that case it seems perfectly possible that the kind of reflections mentioned above may evoke B in the present situation. If, however, I do not habitually experience B, then it would not appear that I can choose here and now to act from it.

(d) A similar account can be given in answer to the question : Suppose I have only one, or one greatly predominant potential motive, A, pointing towards act X; is it ever possible for me to do act Y from B? If I am so constituted that in situations similar to the present one, I habitually experience potential motive B, which points towards act Y, then it appears to be possible to evoke B and do act Y from it; otherwise, it does not appear to be possible.

In the following types of situation it does not appear to be possible to choose from what motive I shall act :

(e) Suppose I have only one or one greatly predominant potential motive, A, pointing towards act X, and there is no method open to me, or at least known to me, whereby I can here and now either modify A or evoke another potential motive B. Then it seems that I cannot in any sense choose from what motive I shall act. In such a case, A has, as we say, "overcome my will". But here we seem to have a situation in which even the act is involuntary. Not merely can I not choose from what motive I shall act, I cannot even choose which act I shall do. (It is worth mentioning that even in such a case I may adopt different attitudes to the act. I can reflect, while the act is taking place, either "If it were within my power to choose, I should choose this", or "If it were within my power to choose, I should not choose this". In this way it might be held that I should be incurring or freeing myself from moral responsibility for the motive and the act. But it remains true that I cannot choose to act from the motive in question or not to do so.)

(f) But there do seem to arise occasions when it is not possible for me here and now to modify the present pattern of my potential motives, yet it does seem to be within my power to choose to do one act rather than another. Now I have argued (in division (a) of this classification) that this choice between acts involves a choice of motives also; but whether I can choose from what motive I shall act in such a case depends on what motive in particular the questioner is interested in. I can choose to act from the potential motive or motives pointing towards one act, say X, rather than from those pointing towards Y; but if the important question is either whether I can choose between the potential motives which all point towards X (or Y), or whether I can choose to act from a potential motive which I do not at present possess, then the answer, on the given hypothesis, is clearly no. (E.g. Suppose (i) fear of public opinion urges me to do act X; (ii) both desire for my own safety and desire for

financial gain urge me to do act Y ; (iii) the relative strengths of these potential motives is fixed, at least until the moment of decision, and I am unable to evoke another potential motive ; and (iv) I can choose whether I shall do X or Y. Then : Question : Can I choose to act from fear of public opinion ? Answer : Yes. Question : Can I choose to act from a combination of desire for my own safety and desire for financial gain ? Answer : Yes. Question : Can I choose to act from desire for my own safety but not from desire for financial gain ? Answer : No. Question : Can I choose to act from, e.g., pity ? Answer : No.)

My conclusion is, therefore, that in very many cases at least it is within the control of our will to act from one motive rather than another. It does not, of course, follow from this that it is ever our *duty* to act from a certain motive, but our argument, if valid, removes the chief objection to this view.

(B) I turn now to the other argument most commonly advanced against the view that it can ever be our duty to act from a certain motive, viz. the "infinite regress" argument as stated by Ross.<sup>1</sup> This argument is admitted to apply only to the view that it is our duty to act from a sense of duty, but Ross quite fairly points out that it would be paradoxical to maintain that it could be our duty to act from other motives but not from the sense of duty, which is generally agreed to be a very high motive, or even (as Ross himself holds) the highest of all.

The argument is in essentials that in the proposition, "It is my duty to do act A from the sense that it is my duty to do act A", the last clause (viz. "it is my duty to do act A") must, if the theory is to be consistently maintained, be expanded by the addition of "from the sense that it is my duty to do act A", and that however often this process is repeated we shall not succeed in removing the last clause, which states an obligation to do an act *simpliciter*.

This, I think, appears at first sight to be a much more formidable argument than in fact it is. I fully admit that it does prove something, but I should disagree with Ross as to what this is. What it seems to me to prove is this : that if we are consistent in holding that it can ever be our duty to do an act from the sense that it is our duty to do that act, then we cannot be using the term "duty" in the same sense in both parts of the proposition. If we *are* using it in the same sense, as Ross seems to assume, then I fully agree that the infinite regress does follow.

<sup>1</sup> *The Right and the Good*, p. 5 ; *Foundations of Ethics*, p. 117.



But if we can show that the term is not, or need not be, used in the same sense in both places, then we shall have shown that the regress does not logically follow; and in that case the proposition, in the form in which we shall have interpreted it, may well be true (though, of course, we shall not have proved it to be true). This is what I shall now try to show.

In order to do so I wish to refer to another view held by Ross himself. In Chapter VII of *Foundations of Ethics* Ross draws the distinction between the notion of an objectively right act (i.e. one which is the best possible fulfilment of all the *prima facie* duties or responsibilities which the situation imposes on the agent), and that of a subjectively right act (i.e. roughly, an act which the agent sincerely believes to be *objectively* right). He then proceeds to discuss the question whether our duty is to do the objectively or the subjectively right act, and comes to the conclusion that our duty is to do the *subjectively* right act.

Now it is, I think, clear that in this discussion there are involved three distinct notions, to each of which the name "duty" might be loosely given in ordinary speech. These are:

- (i) The notion of objectively right.
- (ii) The notion of subjectively right.
- (iii) The notion of "what is actually obligatory on one".

That the third notion is not identical with either of the other two I conclude from the fact that Ross discusses what he clearly regards as the meaningful question whether what is actually obligatory is the objectively or the subjectively right act; and if I interpret him aright, he wishes us to regard his view that what is obligatory on us is the subjectively right act as a *synthetic* proposition.

Now the view which Ross holds here (*viz.* that our duty is to do the subjectively right act) might be, and in fact often is in everyday language, loosely and carelessly expressed in this form: "It is my duty to do what I believe to be my duty". And this proposition is open to logical objection in precisely the same way as the proposition that it is my duty to act from a sense of duty; for the last phrase, which implies that an act can be my duty independently of my beliefs about it, is in conflict with the whole proposition, which states that what makes an act my duty is the fact that I entertain a certain belief about it.

But in this case Ross has made it admirably clear what the reply to such criticisms should be. Ross, or someone holding his general position, would, I imagine, reply somewhat as follows: He would say that the statement, "It is my duty to do what I believe to be my duty", is a clumsy attempt to express something he himself believes to be true, but that it falls into

difficulties through careless expression and neglect to draw necessary distinctions. More accurately stated, the proposition would run: "What is actually obligatory on me (duty in my sense (iii)) is to do the subjectively right act (my sense (ii)), i.e. the act which I believe to be objectively right (my sense (i))". And here it is clear that no logical absurdity is involved.

It is precisely the same type of reply which I should make to Ross's criticism of the proposition that it can be my duty to act from a sense of duty. I admit that it is infelicitously expressed, but that may be remedied; and it happens to be an attempt to state something which I believe in some sense to be true (in *what* sense I shall discuss later). I should reformulate the proposition in the light of the following reflections. The first phrase ("it is my duty . . .") clearly refers, I think, to the notion of what is actually obligatory on me. But in the last phrase ("the sense that it is my duty to do act A") the reference is equally clearly to the notion of *objectively* right; one belief about the act in question, and only one, can be a constituent of the "conscientious motive", viz. the belief that the act does in fact fulfil the moral claims imposed on me, i.e. that it is objectively right. We can therefore rephrase the proposition under discussion thus: "What is actually obligatory on me is to do act A from the belief that act A is objectively right", or perhaps more accurately, "What is actually obligatory on me is to do what is *in fact* the subjectively right act, from the belief (or "sense") that it is objectively right". Here it is clear that no regress is involved, since the assertion that something is actually obligatory on me is not identical with the assertion that it is objectively right.

## II.

The present position of our argument is that it appears that there is no antecedent reason why our duty should always be confined to the doing of a certain act, and should never include acting from a certain motive. But we have not yet established whether it is ever in fact our duty to act from a certain motive. To this positive question I now wish to turn.

It will be convenient here to introduce a distinction between what I wish to call "act-duty" and "total obligation", which may be explained as follows:

It seems to me that there is one important reason, not usually mentioned, why people hold that our duty is simply to do a certain act. This reason is a very simple one, and is certainly

not worthy of being called an *argument*, but, provided that we understand what it does and does not prove, it seems to me quite conclusive. It consists simply in pointing out that there is one established use of the term "ought" and "duty", by which they refer to acts alone. (I shall contend that this is not the only sense, or use, of these terms, but that it does exist, and is an important sense, I fully admit.) When I ask myself, "What is my duty?" or "What ought I to do?" what I may be doing is this: I may be surveying the various acts which, to the best of my knowledge, are open to me, and from these trying to select one as *the right act* in the situation. In order to do this I may have to take into account a great many factors and answer a great many questions (e.g. What good or evil effects would each act have? What have I promised to do? To whom am I indebted and for what?), but the essential point here is that on the basis of my answers to these questions I am trying to select an *act* out of those which I am surveying. Clearly then, if this is what I am doing, the question, "What is my duty?" is here a question about the nature of acts and their relations to the situation in which I find myself; it is in fact, the question, "What is the right *act*?" And if I do the act which is in fact the right one in the situation, then clearly in this sense I have done my duty (objectively); while if I do the act which I have on ethical grounds selected from those open to me (whether my estimate of these grounds has been accurate or not), then I have done what I subjectively ought. But all these questions are questions about acts alone. I propose to employ the term "act-duty" to refer to this usage. My act-duty in a given situation will be that *act* which it is my duty to do, that change in the world which I am morally obliged to produce.

But from the fact that there is this established use of the term "duty" it clearly does not follow that my "total obligation" (i.e. the complete discharge, within the limits of my powers, of everything—whether mere acts, or something more—which the situation requires of me) consists in nothing but the doing of my act-duty. An act might be my duty in the sense explained in the last paragraph, yet I might have other moral obligations in addition to the obligation to perform it. The term "duty" is commonly used to refer also to this notion of total obligation; but neglect to draw the distinction between these two notions has led to many confusions. Once we have drawn the distinction, we can reformulate Ross's position as holding that our total obligation is always completely exhausted by the doing of our act-duty; while the view maintained here is that our total

obligation is not always so exhausted. And both of these propositions are *synthetic*.

We have now to inquire what grounds there are for holding that our total obligation may include acting from a certain motive.

In order that anything should be morally obligatory on us, two conditions have to be fulfilled:

(a) It must be within the control of our will. I have tried to show that, in many cases at least, to act from a certain motive is within the control of our will.

(b) But, clearly, not everything that is within the control of our will is our duty to do. An act, or action, or the having of a certain motive, or whatever may be held to be our duty, must have certain characteristics which are the grounds of its being obligatory on us. The chief characteristics which would tend to make X our duty appear to be the following:

- (i) The possession of intrinsic value by X itself.
- (ii) X's being *productive* of something which possesses intrinsic value.
- (iii) X's effecting a just *distribution* of goods.
- (iv) X's being a fulfilment of certain "special obligations", such as those derived from promises or debts of gratitude.

Now (i) It is admitted on all sides that to act from certain motives does possess great intrinsic value, while to act from certain other motives possesses great intrinsic disvalue. It would seem therefore to be *prima facie* our duty to act from the former and to avoid acting from the latter, in so far as this is within our power.

(ii) It seems clear that acting from certain motives may have *consequences* which have great intrinsic value or disvalue, if only for the obvious reason that it is likely to lead to the future performance by the agent of other actions from the same motive.

(iii) I am willing to admit that it is difficult to see how the motive of my action affects the justice of the distribution of goods. It is true that if I habitually act from some motives rather than from others I shall be more likely to secure such a just distribution. But the justice of the distribution appears to result from the nature of the *act* rather than from the nature of its *motive*; the same distribution could be equally well effected by the same series of acts done from different motives.

(iv) It may not be so obvious that the special obligations derived from promises, benefits received from others, etc., extend to motives, as it is that considerations of intrinsic value do. What I promise someone is almost invariably to do a certain

act or to secure a certain effect, and not to have a certain motive ; yet it does not seem ridiculous, *e.g.* to imagine a religious man making a vow to God that he will act from certain motives and not from others. As for debts of gratitude, while in many cases the obligation which the reception of benefits imposes on me is the conferring of benefits in return, yet it seems reasonable to suggest, that, *e.g.* if someone has treated me in such a way that I have become convinced that he was acting from sincere friendship, I may conceive myself as under an obligation not merely to do certain acts, but to do them from the same spirit of friendship which animated him.

There appear, therefore, to be several characteristics of the type which are normally recognised as giving rise to *prima facie* duties, which do in fact belong to acting from certain motives. The reasonable conclusion seems to be that in cases in which both (a) it is within my power to choose whether I shall act from say potential motives A or B or C, and (b) one of these, say A, possesses characteristics of types (i), (ii) or (iv), mentioned above, more fully than either B or C, then my total obligation includes making A the motive of my act.

It will be necessary to clarify one further point in order to complete this discussion. I have hitherto used the phrase, "it is my duty to act from a certain motive", as if it expressed the only alternative, in terms of motive, to the theory that my duty is always simply to do a certain act. But in fact, as the first sentence of this paper recognises, at least three such alternatives can be formulated. It might be held that the obligation concerned with motive which rests upon me is either

- (a) to have a certain motive ;
- or (b) to act from a certain motive ;
- or (c) to do a certain act from a certain motive.

(In order to bring (a) into line with the terminology we have been using, we shall have to reformulate it to read : "to have a certain *potential* motive". We have been using the term "motive" in such a way that it does not make sense to call my desire, emotion or belief a motive unless it has actually been acted from. In that case, (a) in its original form would be indistinguishable from (b)).

Ross remarks<sup>1</sup> that those who hold the "motive" theory of duty almost always do so in form (c) ; and I certainly think this is the only form in which it can be at all plausibly maintained as a theory of what is our duty in *all* cases. But there is another

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Ethics*, p. 114.

possible view. It may be maintained—and in fact I wish to maintain—that while form (c) covers a great many cases, in certain other cases my duty may be simply (a), to have a certain potential motive, or (b), to act from a certain motive; and I think it is possible to indicate what these cases are.

It is possible, at least, to maintain this on the basis of one hypothesis about act-duty. I do not wish to *justify* this hypothesis here, but I think it is a perfectly reasonable one. Many philosophers write as if there were in every situation some act which is quite positively our duty (because certain positive moral claims rest upon us which only it can fulfil), or some determinate set of acts any one of which is our duty (because each fulfils to an equal degree the positive moral claims upon us). The hypothesis which I wish to state maintains that this is not the case. In every, or almost every situation there appear to be acts open to us which are morally *wrong*—i.e. it is our duty not to do them. But it is not clear that in every case there is some act which it is positively our duty to do. The view which I am stating maintains that in *some* cases the acts open to us which are not definitely morally *forbidden* form a class of acts which are morally permissible—i.e. right simply in the sense that there are no moral considerations which forbid them, not in the sense that we have any positive obligation to do them.

On the basis of this hypothesis we can formulate a division of moral situations, and attempt to state in each case what is (i) the agent's act-duty, and (ii) his total obligation.

(1) Situations in which my act-duty is positively to do some particular act X, or any one of a set of acts,  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , etc. These situations can be subdivided into:

(a) Cases in which *either* it is not within my power to act from one motive rather than from another, *or* none of the potential motives from which I can choose to act possesses any characteristics of the kind which would make it my duty to act from it. In such cases my total obligation is co-extensive with my act-duty—i.e. it is simply to do act X or one of the set of acts  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , as the case may be.

(b) Cases in which one or more of the potential motives possess characteristics such as would make acting from them obligatory on me. In this case my total obligation is to do a certain act (or one of a certain set of acts) from a certain motive.

(c) A special case arises when my act-duty is to do any one of a certain class of acts, but this class is defined by reference to the motive from which the acts are to be done. *E.g.* it may be my duty to show friendship to a certain person. Here my



act-duty is to do any one of a number of acts, such as entertaining him, helping him in various ways, etc. But it is hard to deny that my total obligation includes not merely doing certain acts appropriate to friendship but also, in so far as it is within my power, actually having that friendship as my motive. In fact the precise nature of the act appears to be immaterial, so long as it proceeds from the motive in question (the motive itself will, of course, delimit the nature of the act: *e.g.* a man motivated by sincere friendship would not perform *any* act as an expression of that friendship, the friendship itself would lead him to take account of his friend's needs and desires, etc.). In this case my total obligation might be appropriately described as "to act from a certain motive".

(2) Situations in which I have no positive act-duty—*i.e.* all the acts open to me are either morally wrong or morally permissible, but none is obligatory. Then as far as act-duty is concerned it will not matter which of the permissible acts open to me I do; *i.e.* my act-duty is not to do a certain act or one of certain set of acts, but merely to avoid certain acts. But whatever permissible act I do I may do, say, from affection or from malice; and in so far as it is within my power to choose from which of these I shall act, it is part of my total obligation to act from the former and not from the latter. We can generalise this by saying that there is a sub-division (*d*) of this general class of situation, in which, of the potential motives from which it is within my power to choose to act, there are one or more which possess characteristics such as tend to make it obligatory to act from them; my total obligation in these cases includes both avoiding certain acts (my act-duty) and *acting from a certain motive*.

(*e*) In most other cases of this general type (*viz.* under conditions parallel with those mentioned in (*a*) above) my total obligation coincides with my act-duty, *i.e.* it consists solely in the avoidance of certain acts.

But finally (*f*) my total obligation may in certain special circumstances be simply to *have a certain potential motive*; as when there is some act which is not in fact open to me but which it would be my duty to perform from a certain motive if it were. *E.g.* I might because of illness be incapable of paying a debt of gratitude to a friend, and it could not therefore be my duty to do so; yet it might still be held to be my duty to have such sentiments of friendship and gratitude as I might act from were it within my power to do so. In such a case I appear to have no particular act-duty; and my total obligation is simply to *have a certain potential motive*.

## CONCLUSION.

It is therefore not quite accurate to say without qualification that I dissent from the view that our duty is always simply to do a certain act. I have distinguished two senses in which the term "duty" may be used, which I have called "act-duty" and "total obligation", respectively. In the first of these senses I agree that what is our duty is always simply to do a certain act; and by that I mean that when I ask, in this sense, "What ought I to do?" or "Have I done my duty?" I am enquiring which act of those open to me, or whether a certain act which I have performed, most completely fulfils or has fulfilled the moral claims resting on me, and only that; in other words, I am choosing or examining a certain act with reference to its relations to the moral aspects of the situation.<sup>1</sup>

But in the second sense of duty (*viz.* total obligation) my duty may involve more than the doing of a mere act; I have contended in this paper that it frequently includes acting from a certain

<sup>1</sup> Is it the subjectively or the objectively right act (as distinguished in chapter vii of *Foundations of Ethics*) which is my act-duty? My answer to this would be as follows: I should accept the distinction which Ross draws as a valid and important one; but when he contends that our duty (*sc.* act-duty) is always to do the subjectively right act, I should reply that this depends on what question about duty we are asking. When we ask ourselves "What ought I to do?" (*i.e.* when we are deliberating about a future course of action), we are *always*, it seems to me, trying to discover what is the *objectively* right act, and the answer to this question is therefore: "that act which is *objectively* right". We are inquiring, that is to say, into the *facts* of the situation, not into our beliefs about them; even if we never in fact arrive at anything more than belief, our aim in our inquiry is to ascertain what the facts are, whatever they are believed to be. But when we ask, "Have I done what I ought?" or "Has he done what he ought?" then I think we may legitimately hold (with Ross) that we are asking whether the *subjectively* right act has been performed. I think this because it seems to me to be perfectly intelligible to say (and in fact we do say it) that a man has acted as he ought, although we believe that in his deliberation as to what he ought to do he gave the wrong answer. Suppose it is a man's duty to do X, but he believes it to be his duty to do Y. If this situation is possible—and it is difficult to deny that it is—then in answering the question as to what he ought to do he has made a mistake; this must be a mistake about what is *objectively* right, since if he clearly believed Y to be his duty he cannot be mistaken about what is *subjectively* right: *i.e.* in asking "What ought I to do?" he was trying to discover the *objectively* right act. Yet suppose he does X (*i.e. ex hypothesi* an act which he believes not to be right); then I do not think we should say he had acted as he ought to have done, though we should be inclined to say this if he did Y which he believed to be his duty; *i.e.* the question "Has he done what he ought?" is a question about whether the act in question was subjectively right.

motive (whether it ever includes even more than this I do not wish to discuss here).

My quarrel with those who hold that our duty is always simply to do a certain act may therefore be summed up as follows: If they were to point out the two senses of the term duty which I have indicated (*viz.* act-duty and total obligation) and urge that in the interests of clarity it would be better to restrict the use of the term "duty" to the former, I should have no quarrel with their view—indeed I should acclaim it as introducing a much needed clarification into the terminology of the subject. But, as usually stated, the view appears to assert that once we have done a certain act, be its motive what it may, then we have completely discharged all the moral obligations which can in any sense rest upon us. And this I believe to be entirely false.

### III.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

*An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth.* By BERTRAND RUSSELL.  
London: George Allen & Unwin. First published 1940.  
Second impression 1943. Pp. 352. 12s. 6d.

THE present book can be described as containing investigations preliminary to a critical estimate of empiricism.

Since before a belief can be examined it must be expressed in language, it is argued that one of the important tasks to be undertaken in a study of the grounds of our beliefs is an investigation of the relation between experiences and the words to which they give rise. This is all the more urgent because the logical empiricists, while admitting certain types of statement about events, think that there are certain types of statement which look as if they were about events, but whose verification (or falsification) turns entirely on linguistic usage. These types of statement, they insist, should be translated into statements about words. And since they agree that before a belief can be examined it must be expressed in a statement, and since their main preoccupation is with the process by which in science a transition is made from sentences of one type to sentences of other types, they seem to be countenancing the idea that all that need to be considered in an empiricist epistemology are sentences, expressed or apprehended. Whether or not this is a correct interpretation of their view (which I am inclined to think is more complex) their emphasis on words has brought out the importance of investigating the relation between experiences and the words describing them.

Most empiricists, including the logical empiricists, accept as provisional basic material not only sentences uttered by themselves, but sentences issuing from other persons. But this, Lord Russell insists, involves the assumption that such sentences stand to experiences which we cannot share in a similar relation to that in which our sentences stand to our experiences, and this assumption needs some justification, and is in any case less immediately credible than our own experiences. The strictest form of empiricism will require us to start with our own experiences, and show in what way if at all we can refer to or make use of experiences in which we cannot directly share.

In regard to our own experiences, a distinction must be made between those in which (if I may put it roughly) we are trying to make some statement which can only be justified by a number of experiences, and those in which we make a statement which is justified by the single experience on the basis of which it is made. *E.g.* if I am trying to determine whether what is in front of me is paper, I shall need a number of experiences; whereas if I notice a white

patch, and say "white there", this statement is made on the basis of the single experience, and is independent of any other experience, even though my ability to say "white there" depends on my having formed certain linguistic habits in the past. Now if we are to learn something from a number of experiences, each experience must teach us something; and what we learn from each single experience must for epistemology be more fundamental than what we learn from a number of them. Hence a strict empiricism will require us to start with momentary experiences of our own, each expressed in words which arise out of and are justified by the momentary experience. Lord Russell arrives at a strict formulation of this view by means of his conception of an object language (though he has to remodel this language in the process) and of his distinction between object words and logical words.

The conception of an object language (first put forward in a symposium in the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume XVII) is derived partly from a consideration of the hierarchy of languages needed to avoid the logical paradoxes of the liar, etc. This involves (a) that the statement that  $p$  is true (or false) must belong to the language of next higher order than  $p$ . (b) Since a negative statement is taken as asserting that the corresponding affirmative statement is false, (a) involves that the word "not" cannot occur in a language of lowest order. Further, (c) any statement about all the members of a particular class must belong to the language of next higher order than the language containing the names of the members. (d) Words characterising other words must belong to the language of next higher order than the language containing the words characterised. This is as far as the paradoxes take us, so far as I can see. Lord Russell's primary language goes further than this, and excludes all words which "presuppose other words", i.e. which "have no meaning in isolation", such as "the", "some", "or", "but", and conjunctions generally. It is this consideration which leads him "provisionally" to exclude words indicating attitudes such as believing, desiring, doubting, etc., for the description of which a subordinate sentence appears to be necessary, telling what is believed, desired, etc.: though later on he concludes that these attitudes can be described without referring to any such sentences.

We are left with words which have meaning in isolation from other words. Psychologically they must be capable of being learnt without it being necessary to have learnt any other words previously, or at least they must be such as a being with indefinitely extended perceptive powers would be capable of learning in this way. But even this is not enough. We must confine ourselves to words used indicatively. I can imagine a child brought up in such a way that the only words it was able to understand and use were words like "No!", "Yes!", "If—!", "Mustn't!", "Don't!"; but none of these would be included in the object language. "All that

is essential", we are told, "to an object word is some similarity among a set of phenomena, which is sufficiently striking for an association to be established between instances of the set and instances of the word for the set, the method of establishing the association being that, for some time, the word is frequently heard when a member of the set is seen" (72). We need not stress "seen", but can take it as standing for any mode of perceptual experience. Names of things, of qualities, words such as "run", "eat", "shout", words such as "in", "above", "before" are all included. Some words referring to certain types of social situation seem to be excluded, as in the cases mentioned above. The grounds for excluding them (apart from those derived from the logical paradoxes) seem to be that there could be no occurrence which could be described as a "no" or a "yes"; "or" is excluded on the ground that when you say "pudding or pie" you are "not saying something directly applicable to an object", but are stating a relation between *saying* "pudding" and *saying* "pie" (73). Your statement is about statements, and only indirectly about objects. ("Or" is discussed more fully later.)

Similarly "not" is excluded because there is no occurrence which could be described as (e.g.) "not seeing cheese" (though I should have said that there are social situations that could be described as "no" situations, just as there are people described as "yes-men". It is to some extent a matter of which words catch on as adjectival.) The treatment of "all" and "some" on these lines (74) is too brief to be satisfactory: a stranger may not be able by observation to know that A, B, C, etc., are all the inhabitants of a village (to take the illustration given in the case of "all"), but this would not be sufficient to exclude the word "all" from the object language. A child can see that these two cakes are all the cakes on the table; and it does seem as if this might be known by perception alone. None of these grounds for exclusion seem to be very rigorous and the logical reasons are stated to be of greater importance. I confess that I find it difficult to decide what could or could not be done by an individual (in a social situation in which he was constantly hearing words) whose vocabulary was confined to words capable of describing "occurrences". However, he must be supposed to have formed habits in regard to the perceiving and using of words: hearing or seeing the word would "cause a reaction appropriate to what the word means", viz. behaviour, up to a point, identical with the behaviour that would result from the sensible presence of the object designated by the word (69); and again, the sensible presence of the object would be needed before the word itself was uttered (75). Every single word when uttered is an assertion, indicating the sensible presence of the object.

All other languages are based on the object language. In the next language above it (which contains the object language as a



part) there are words enabling us to speak about the object language. Of these the most important are words such as "true", "false", "not", "or", "some", "all".

Not every word in the object language can be said to describe a single experience. If, when I am hot, I am stimulated as a consequence of a linguistic habit to say "hot", or if when I see white I am stimulated to say "white", the word "describes" my experience. Only words which have this direct relation to sense can be spoken of in this way. Words like "dog", "cat", etc., which occur in the object language go beyond what can be experienced on a single occasion. They involve expectations, which subsequent events may disappoint: whereas words like "hot", "white", describing a present experience, involve none. Only experiences described by words of the latter sort can be taken as primitive from the standpoint of epistemology. From this point of view the object language contains too much.

From another point of view the object language may (I think) contain too little. Theoretically, we are told (77), given a sufficient range of perceptive capacity, every non-linguistic occurrence could be expressed in it, including, it turns out later, states such as desires, beliefs and doubts. But this statement, even if the reference to perceptive capacity is meant to turn it into a tautology—and I do not see what could justify the statement unless it were—covers a mass of assumptions. It assumes that every non-linguistic occurrence can be described by means of words each of which has been learned independently of other words; and I do not see how positions even in my own private space and time could be fixed if I were restricted to such words. It assumes that every non-linguistic occurrence can be described by means of words each of which expresses a perceptual experience or (if we include words like "cat" and "dog") a series of perceptual experiences together with a number of expectations; and this begs the question whether there are events capable of being referred to by us, and yet not capable of being described by words which have been learned through perceptual experiences of the kind mentioned, however wide the capacity may be assumed to be. I see no ground then for the assertion that the object language, if it were wide enough, would be adequate to do what is claimed for it.

More important for the purpose of the book is the need to supplement object words by words enabling us to form complex sentences from object word sentences by logical processes, to talk about sentences containing object words, and to ask questions and discuss possible answers concerning the relations between events, our experiences, and sentences describing them. The consequence is shattering; the individual finds himself full of desires to make statements about occurrences which not only his own object words are powerless to describe, but which he thinks of as of such a kind that no object words related to human experiences could describe them. It is

cold comfort to be told that the difficulties are due merely to our shortage of object words.

The doctrine of qualities developed in Chapter VI would if it could be substantiated go far to vindicate the claims made for the object language. This involves (a) describing what is ordinarily referred to as a "thing" as a complex bundle of what are ordinarily called "qualities", so that "this is red" is more properly to be expressed "redness is here"; (b) accepting the view that if the quality found in one place is indistinguishable from the quality found in another place, it is identical with it. This abolishes unknowable substances, and makes the principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles analytic. Position in visual space is described by co-ordinates by means of which any visual place is related to some standard visual place in such a way that no two places are described by the same set of co-ordinates. (This assumes that the standard place itself contains a unique bundle of qualities, or that if we did happen to come across another exactly similar bundle, we should be able to find its co-ordinates in relation to the standard place, so that the bundle plus the co-ordinates would form a unique set. But there might be complications. Further, I can see how the process described could be carried out in regard to what is in my visual field at a given moment, but find it difficult, in regard to objects which are so far apart that they could not possibly enter into one visual field. With regard to such objects it is I think physical and not visual space that can be constructed.) Position in time is dealt with similarly, by supposing a clock which numbers the days as well as the hours and minutes. Each complete bundle, containing qualities, space co-ordinates, and time related to our unique clock, would then be unique, and would have the spatio-temporal properties that physics requires of things (100), making the construction of physical space-time possible.

I find this very perplexing. In the first place, the doctrine, so far as it concerns qualities, seems to derive all its plausibility from the exploration of the perceptual field, considered as merely something whose *esse est percipi*. If the seen-blue in one part of my visual field is identical in blueness with the seen-blue in another part, then we can agree that there is no ground for asserting that they are two, apart from the gratuitous assumption that the same seen-blue cannot be in two places at once. But we are told later on that what we see in visual space is quite different from what can exist in physical space (at least, where there are no brains); hence there seems no reason for holding that what can be said of perceived qualities can be said of what can exist in physical space. In the second place, the argument alleged to show how physical space can be constructed does not seem to do what it claims to do: all it does is to show how a single individual can correlate different parts of his different visual spaces with qualities; no account has been given of the way in which the qualities perceived by one

individual can be related to those perceived by another. And this is important, since we are told elsewhere that what we directly know when we perceive is a state of ourselves (114) and that no two persons can perceive the same qualities (229-30)—in spite of the fact that (228 top) we are told that "the total of places in A's visual space (apart from different excellence of vision) is identical with, not merely similar to, the total of places in B's visual space".

In Chapter VII possible objections to this theory are discussed. It is taken for granted that the reader can see for himself why words such as "this", "that", "I", "you", "here", "now", "past", "present", etc.—called "egocentric" words—must be shown to be not needed for a description of any part of the world, physical or psychological, if the theory replacing substances by bundles of qualities is to be maintained. I find it a little difficult to see what the fuss is about; if "here" was got rid of satisfactorily in the previous chapter, there should be no difficulty about the rest of the words.

The chapter begins by noting that ego-centric particulars can all be defined in terms of "this", and concentrates on getting rid of this word. After various puzzles about what can be the meaning of "this", the statement is made (111) that "this" "depends upon the relation of the user of a word to the object with which the word is concerned"; and by treating a person as a complex physiological mechanism it is concluded that an immediate verbal reaction to a stimulus produces a sentence beginning "this is . . .", while a delayed verbal reaction produces a sentence beginning "that was . . ."; so that the difference between the two sentences "lies not in their meaning, but in their causation" (113); i.e. neither "this is" nor "that was" is essential to their meaning, i.e. they can have the same meaning. What this comes to seems to be that just as we can eliminate "here" by constructing space co-ordinates so we can eliminate "this" by constructing dates.

How far does this whole discussion take us? The discussion of "I now" (114) seems to indicate that we are still within the field of experience of a single individual. For every statement containing "this" is equivalent to a statement containing "what I now notice", and what I notice is always a state of myself. If so, the time determination I substitute for "this" would seem to be merely a device for relating states of myself to one another, just as would the space co-ordinates I substitute for "here"; and the whole theory of qualities, so far, remains a theory about states of myself.

Chapters VIII to XI are concerned (the Introduction tells us) "with perceptive knowledge, and more particularly with 'basic propositions', i.e. with those propositions which most directly report knowledge derived from perception".

Chapter VIII falls into two parts, (a) an account of "perceptual experience" (a term preferred to "perception") and its relation

to knowledge based on physics and physiology, (b) a further discussion of egocentric particulars, which raise the problem of passing from statements about myself to statements which can be incorporated into impersonal science. I shall put the question in the following way, which is suggested by what is said on page 126. A physiological organism which has frequently heard a sound similar to the sound of the word "hot" when it was having perceptual experiences of a certain type, comes by habit to utter a sound of this sort when it is having experiences of this sort. If A has this habit, we can say that A attaches meaning to the word "hot". Suppose B has a habit of saying "hot" under circumstances which, so far as we can make out, are similar. Can we say A and B attach the same meaning to the word? Can we free the meaning of the word from reference to A and to B?

In dealing with this, the question is not raised whether we can say that A and B have similar perceptual experiences, and it is worth while to ask why. In the first part of the chapter, a perceptual experience is described as consisting of a sensory core (*e.g.* my having a visual experience of a cat shape) and certain states (which may be purely bodily) resulting from habit, which can be called "expectations", *e.g.* that the thing will behave in a cat-like manner. The sensory core we are told is not cognitive, but the expectations are, and are called "beliefs" (121).

Further, it is argued on the basis of physics that when I have a visual experience of a colour, it is more probable that certain light frequencies will be found at the surface of the object causing my visual experience than that the object will behave in the ways cats generally behave. This is expressed by saying that "the inferences drawn from the sensory core have a higher probability than those drawn from the other parts of the perceptive experience" (123), which seems to mean that in a perceptive experience, while the sensory core is not itself cognitive, the expectations formed by a scientist about the unexperienced causes of the sensory core are more likely to be correct than his expectations regarding the future behaviour of the object.

In the case then of "hot"—or "I am hot" or "this is hot"—we should have certain expectations about the occurrences causing our sensory experience. This seems to be what lies behind the statement (127) that in a developed language "hot" means only the quality in occurrences which will cause me to utter the word "hot" if they are suitably related to me. But this gives us so far no help in seeing how we pass from the primitive to the developed meaning of "hot", and it has next to be shown how this can be done.

The method is the same as that by which "here" was got rid of in Chapter VI and "this" got rid of in Chapter VII: by getting a bundle of qualities compresent with hotness, and so chosen that it will not occur more than once, so that this bundle occupies a

unique situation in my total perceptual field at this moment (to which the name "W" is given) and never occurs in any of my past or future W's. Instead of making the egocentric statement, "this is hot", I can now make the "impersonal" statement, "hotness is part of W" (what particular part being made precise by reference to the bundle). And the conclusion is drawn that "in this form, what I have learnt from perception is ready for incorporation in impersonal science" (128).

Here again I fail to see that this conclusion is justified. If by "impersonal science" is meant a body of statements I can make about my experiences without being compelled to use words like "this", "here", "now", etc., the conclusion is unexceptionable; but it is insufficient if by "impersonal science" is meant a body of statements capable of having an identical meaning for other persons in the sense already spoken of, which involves not only something said, but something experienced. Nothing has been done to show that my W has any identity with the W of other persons, or that my unique bundles of qualities have any relation to other persons; and until this is done, the present method leaves us with our own experiences. Chapter XXIV, with its point that "my perceptual whole W is, from the standpoint of physics, inside my head as a physical object" (340) gives us no help on this point.

I stress the point, because it is up to a critic of the logical empiricists to show that he can still talk of experiences and deal satisfactorily with this kind of problem, which the logical empiricists regard as a pseudo-problem.

The next three chapters deal in turn with epistemological premisses, basic propositions, and factual premisses. For the purposes of epistemology we need premisses, as certain as we can get them, from which the rest of the propositions we regard as knowledge can be deduced. Included among these will be those "required to produce our faith in deductive arguments" (132). If induction is based, psychologically, upon primitive beliefs, I suppose these primitive beliefs would be put in the list of epistemological premisses, so long as they did not contradict any other premisses. The main point is not that a premiss should be certain, but that it should not be inferred (124). Because of their possible uncertainty, we shall not try to reduce them to a minimum. A belief can be said to be inferred, psychologically, if it is caused by other beliefs. But not all beliefs so caused will be included among epistemological premisses. They must be scrutinised and subjected to analysis; and can then be arranged in order according to the degree of certainty we provisionally attach to them.

A beginning is made in the search for such premisses with what are called "basic propositions". A basic proposition is defined as one caused, as immediately as possible, by a perceptive experience (137), or more precisely, as one which "arises on occasion of a perception, which is the evidence for its truth, and has a form such

that no two propositions having this form can be mutually inconsistent if derived from different percepts" (139).

It is important to note that all propositions basic in this sense are "personal, since no-one else can share my percepts, and transitory, for after a moment they are replaced by memories" (139). Later on we find that some memory propositions must be accepted as basic; and it is clear that if at 3 o'clock I notice that I am hot and at 3.1 I write down "hot at 3", this is useless to me as a record at 3.2 unless I remember that I wrote it as a record of an experience of mine. What I use at any moment, in fact, will include, in addition to my momentary percept, records just as complicated as Neurath's protocol sentences (criticised in Chapter X).

Of the three types of empiricist, social, individual, and momentary (135), only the momentary ones start with propositions sufficiently basic. I must start from what *I* know; and from what I know *now*.

Basic propositions are described as "pure perceptive propositions", and we are told that there are perhaps no propositions which are quite basic in the sense defined. All basic propositions would be factual premisses, and the word "basic" is used of propositions in all the four types of factual premiss enumerated on page 153: perceptual propositions, memory propositions, negative basic propositions, and basic propositions concerning what I am now believing, doubting, desiring, etc. The only difference seems to be that the criterion of a factual premiss is less stringent than that of a basic proposition. Any premiss whose truth involves some kind of temporal occurrence, which is uninferred, and which is believed after careful scrutiny, is a factual premiss.

Our epistemological premisses then it seems will contain, as the most certain factual premisses, any genuinely basic proposition; next, a number of factual premisses not quite so certain; and in addition, "premisses needed for deduction, and those other premisses, whatever they may be, that are necessary for the non-demonstrative inferences upon which science depends", with perhaps still others (152).

There is another type of factual premiss not referred to in this chapter, which is of great importance later, *viz.* basic existential propositions, expressed by sentences of the form "there is an  $x$  such that  $fx$ ". The need for such propositions is shown in the following way.

The position is reached in the discussions of the next few chapters that a significant indicative sentence asserted by a speaker who is not lying "expresses" a state of the speaker, which may be called a "belief"; if true, it "indicates" a fact, and fails to if false. Only in the case of an assertion regarding a present state of the speaker is what is indicated experienced by the speaker; in that case what is indicated and what is expressed are identical. If I am hot, and say "I am hot", this state expresses a state of myself, and also



indicates this state. Again, if I say "you are hot", this sentence expresses my belief that you are hot, and if you are hot, it indicates your state; and my belief is true, because you are hot. Your hotness can be called the "verifier" of my sentence, and of my belief; and the complex relation between a verifier and what it verifies can be worked out in causal terms.

But while I can experience my own hotness I cannot experience yours. How then can I think of your hotness, so as to make or understand a statement about it? I have no name for it in my language. If I had I should be able to make a statement "you are hot" (leaving aside for the moment the question of "you") which would be on all fours with the statement "I am hot". But as I haven't a name for your hotness, what can I say? We are told (232) that the assertion I can make has the form "there is an  $x$  such that  $\phi x$ ", and that I can't assert  $\phi a$  because I have no name " $a$ ". Here some readers may find the symbols not quite easy to follow. Conventionally, " $\phi a$ " is a subject-predicate sentence, where " $\phi$ " stands for a predicate, and " $a$ " is the name of the subject having the predicate. On the theory of this book, which substitutes bundles of qualities for things, we should expect " $a$ " to be the name of the particular bundle of qualities referred to as "you" (cf. 228-230). But this won't do, for it turns out that the name I can't use is the name for your hotness. "If I say 'you are hot', the verifier is hotness-*there-now*, of which I am not aware" (231 foot). According to this, " $a$ " would, if I could use it, stand for "hotness-*there-now*"; and this seems to be what is needed for the statement in the paragraph at the foot of page 232. But then what does " $\phi$ " stand for? If "there is an  $x$  such that  $\phi x$ " is to have any relation to my statement about your being hot, then (leaving aside the question of "you") what I say should be something to the effect that "among the bundle of qualities which I refer to as 'you' there is one which is included in the class 'hotness'" and if this is to have the form "there is an  $x$  such that  $\phi x$ " we must reword it "there is a quality  $x$  which is ( $\alpha$ ) among the bundle of qualities I refer to as 'you', and ( $\beta$ ) included in the class 'hotness'"; so that  $\phi$  here includes both ( $\alpha$ ) and ( $\beta$ ). And I think this is what is intended.

In the case where I say "I shall be hot" this has the form of an existence sentence where, if my belief is true, there will be a time when I shall be able to experience the verifier: in the case "you are hot" I never can, though "hot" still refers to a quality capable of being experienced, *viz.* by you; if I say "the stone is hot" an existence sentence is needed, and the quality attributed to the stone is one which falls outside all human experience—an unknown cause of our experience of hotness.

The importance of this type of sentence appears in the discussions of Chapters XVII and XX to XXII. Unless we can justify the inclusion of some basic existence propositions among our epistemological premisses, we shall be unable to justify any statements

referring to anything beyond what we immediately experience. No-one seriously wants to restrict what he regards as knowledge to such statements, it is contended; and in Chapters XX to XXII it is argued further that there is no reason why we should not hold that there is a sense in which a proposition can be said to be true, even though we have no means of proving it, or of making it probable, by means of experience. This conclusion is reached through a discussion of the principle of excluded middle, and of the attempt to restrict significant propositions to those which are in some sense verifiable.

In Chapter XVII various questions are discussed regarding the experiences giving rise to beliefs expressed by sentences of the form "there is an  $x$  such that  $fx$ ". Logically, I can assert this if I know  $fa$ , or  $fb$ , etc.: but while I could only assert " $fa$ " if I had direct experience of  $a$ , I must be supposed to be capable of asserting the existential sentence in cases when I have no experience of  $a$  or  $b$  etc. The suggestion is made that the belief expressed by the existential sentence consists of the part of the reaction which is common to the reactions making up the various beliefs expressed by " $fa$ ", " $fb$ ", " $fc$ ", etc. (241), and that it arises in us when the causal process from fact to belief is not strong enough (or perhaps not short enough) to produce the belief expressed by the full proposition (244).

I find it difficult to take this suggestion literally. Is there any reason for supposing, for example, that in all my reactions to different men there is sufficient common (in the strict sense of that word) to be able to constitute, *by itself*, a reaction? And that this is the reaction called forth when I hear and understand the words "there's a man"? This is what the suggestion involves.

It might perhaps be argued with more plausibility that the beliefs expressed when I say "There's A", "There's B", "There's C" etc., (where A, B, and C, etc., are men perceived by me), and when I hear "There's a man" and believe it, all have something in common. But this is not all that is suggested, nor would it be sufficient. It would still leave the state constituting the belief "There's a man" to be described.

The suggestion is, however, significant for the understanding of the general point of view of the book, especially when taken in conjunction with the statement that if I had enough perceptual experience I could describe everything. If your hotness could operate on me more intensely, or perhaps by a more direct causal chain, I should be able to say "you are hot" in the same sense in which at present I say "I am hot". But as it is, the causal process is either too feeble, or too lengthy, and can only produce in me the conviction that there is in you an instance of hotness. The assumption here is that events I can't experience perceptually but to which I can refer are operating on me in precisely the same way as those I can perceive, but producing only part of the effect: somewhat in the same way, I suppose, as a person whose eyes enabled

him to see only various shades of gray might be said to receive only part of the effect produced on the eyes of normal persons. Such a person might, by means of other indications and information given to him by persons with normal eyesight, be able to refer to objects as red, or yellow, etc.; he would be in a position similar to ourselves in regard to the experience of other persons. I don't know whether a conclusion of this sort is intended to be a consequence of the suggestion.

But if we are to extend this to the case where a person makes statements about the unknown causes of his percepts, as the middle paragraph of page 239 suggests, then it would seem that we shall have to suppose that the causal chain from the unknown cause to the percept produces not only the percept itself as an effect, but also a less complete effect, *viz.* that which results in the existential sentence "something caused my percept", and this less complete effect would be part of the total effect which would be produced in him if (as is not the case) he were able to perceive the cause of his state, as well as his state. If anything like this is to be regarded as not merely possible, but actual (*cf. e.g.,* Locke on perceptual assurance and Whitehead on the perceptive mode of causal efficacy) then it would be appropriate to say that we have two kinds of perceptual experience, *viz.* complete perceptual experience, where we can say "*fa*" and partial perceptual experience, where we can only say "there is an *x* such that *fx*". On the whole in this book Lord Russell is only exploring possibilities, and not making final decisions, and he does not see any strong grounds for the belief that there are unknown causes of our percepts. At the same time he finds no strong grounds against it. This is brought out in Chapters XX to XXII.

I note a few points stressed in these later discussions. (1) There seems no reason for supposing that the relation of a verifier to a belief in virtue of which the belief is true or false is any different in the case where the verifier is not perceptually experienced from the relation in the case where the verifier is so experienced. (2) Unless a person is prepared to admit as significant existential propositions whose verifiers cannot be perceptually experienced, he must reject not only statements about unknown physical causes, but statements about other persons' experiences, about what happens to things experienced by himself when he is not experiencing them, and even about any experiences of himself which he does not actually notice. If he accepts any of these statements, he is in principle admitting the possibility of unexperienced events, and therefore of true propositions that are not verifiable. The view that there are no true propositions that are not verifiable is one of the doctrines of what is described as the epistemological correspondence theory of truth, and is attributed to pure empiricism; the logical correspondence theory of truth is described as admitting the possibility of true propositions that are not verifiable. The general conclusion is

drawn that everyone does have beliefs which he regards as valid, and which a pure empiricist would have to regard as invalid, and that therefore there are no pure empiricists. (3) Since any beliefs about matters of fact that we regard as valid must be connected with our own perceptual experiences, and since no statement about a particular event can be derived by demonstrative principles from statements about other particular events, it follows that we must admit non-demonstrative principles of inference which are not derivable from experience. But this point is not fully discussed in the book. It seems clear that for a satisfactory treatment it would be necessary to go into the question of what is the significance of statements containing the word "probable"—which is outside the scope of the book.

For an adequate consideration of the point of view underlying this *Inquiry* it would be necessary to deal with a number of topics I have had to leave undiscussed. The book is full of important discussions: I note, e.g., the account of the psychological states expressed by logical words such as "not", "or", "some" (Ch. V); whether the state of believing  $p$  can be described without mentioning  $p$  as a constituent (Ch. XIX); the psychological analysis of the beliefs expressed by general sentences (Ch. XVIII); the construction of a logical language in which all sentences permitted by the rules would be significant sentences (Ch. XIII, C); the principles of extensionality and atomicity (Ch. XIX); the views of Carnap (Ch. XXII), and of Dewey (Ch. XXIII); and the last two chapters regarding the nature of analysis, and the question whether a study of syntax can result in knowledge of the structure of the world. But the book is so full of topics that I could not deal with more than a selection of them without extending this notice unduly. It is likely to be a book from which many discussions will take their source, when such things can once more occupy young men's minds.

L. J. RUSSELL.

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*Evolutionary Ethics.* By JULIAN S. HUXLEY. Oxford University Press, 1943. Pp. 24. 2s.

THIS little book contains the *Romanes Lectures*, delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre on 11th June, 1943, together with 13 pages of notes.

The contents may be divided into the following five main sections. (1) A theory of the development of conscience in the individual from infancy. (2) An account of the chief features of evolution in general. (3) An account of the evolution of moral codes and of their correlation with different stages in the evolution of societies. (4) An attempt to show that objective moral standards can be based on a study of the characteristic features of evolutionary change. (5) A statement of the chief peculiarities of a code of morality based on a study of evolution.

I propose first to state the various parts of the theory as fairly as I can, and then to make some comments and criticisms.

(1) *Development of Conscience in the Individual*. The theory which Prof. Huxley puts forward is based on the speculations of certain psychoanalysts. So far as I can understand it, it may be stated as follows.

At about the second year of its post-natal life a baby begins to draw a distinction between itself and the outer world. At this stage the focal point of the latter for the baby is its mother or any other person, such as its nurse, who has constant charge of it. This individual is recognised by the baby as another *person*, and it views her under two aspects, *viz.* (i) as a source of satisfaction, peace, and security, and (ii) as an authority who has and exercises the power to thwart certain of its impulses. The baby's cognition of its mother under the former aspect is toned with affection; its cognition of her under the latter is toned with hostility.

Hostile emotion towards the mother, and the associated hostile wishes and actions, become the objects of a new kind of emotion in the baby. To this second-order and reflexive emotion Prof. Huxley gives the name 'feeling of guilt'. Emotions, wishes, and tendencies towards action which are the objects of guilty emotion tend to be either relegated to the background of consciousness or wholly repressed into the unconscious. There they continue to exist and to be the objects of guilty emotion, and thence they continually seek an outlet. Generally they can find one only in disguised forms; but from time to time they emerge more or less openly in the form of rage and violence against the mother.

The process described above is useful to human beings for the following reason. Young children are faced with many kinds of conflict to which other young creatures are not exposed. Owing to their lack of experience they cannot solve them rationally. Now it would be highly detrimental to the development of the individual if the conflicting impulses merely inhibited each other and led to a complete deadlock, or if they just alternated with each other on equal terms leading to endless vacillation. The attachment of a feeling of guilt to some and not to others of the conflicting impulses, and the consequent fairly complete suppression or repression of the former, ensures that these two disadvantages will be avoided.

After the capacity to feel guilty emotion has once been brought into activity over the conflict between love and hate of one's mother that kind of emotion can be directed to one term in *any* conflict of impulses, and it will then lead to the same kind of results in the way of suppression or repression. This, however, is subject to one limitation. Such an extension of the guilty emotion from a person's hostility towards his mother to certain of his other impulses will take place only when the latter are viewed by him in relation to some person or institution for which he feels love or respect. This latter feeling may be either unmixed or blended with other emotions

into some complex sentiment, such as awe, patriotism, self-respect, etc.

Prof. Huxley envisages another way of dealing with conflicting impulses, which becomes available to an individual only when he has acquired adequate experience. This is described as solving such conflicts 'rationally'. It is not clear to me what Prof. Huxley considers this process to be, or how he supposes it to be connected with the 'proto-ethical mechanism' which he has been describing. Does this mechanism merely set the stage and prepare certain of the conditions without which no *persistent* action of any kind, and therefore no deliberately planned action, can take place? Or is there some more detailed connexion between the proto-ethical mechanism and the deliberate subordination and co-ordination of impulses in pursuance of a course of action inspired by moral ideals and limited by moral principles?

(1.1) *Healthy and Unhealthy Development of Conscience.* The processes which have been described above may go on in a 'healthy' way or may be subject to various 'unhealthy' aberrations. In the former case, we are told, 'the feeling of rightness reflects, though in an embryonic form, a morality which is objectively right'. It can then be 'developed by reason and aspiration into a conscience which is indispensable as a moral guide'. In the latter case, however, the patient will develop a conscience which is described as 'distorted and unrealistic'. He may also develop (what is not the same thing) 'distorted and unrealistic' beliefs about the nature of Conscience. It is not clear to me whether these two very different pathological results are held by Prof. Huxley to be invariable concomitants.

(1.11) *Healthy Development.* About the 'realistic' conscience which develops when the process goes on healthily we are given the following information. It is 'normal' and 'healthy' to feel *some* degree of guilty emotion towards one's hatred of those 'whom we must at all costs love'. In particular it is said to be 'perfectly realistic to feel *some* guilt at hating one's beloved mother'.

A distinction is drawn between 'internal' and 'external' realism. The former consists in not feeling excessive guilt and in not compensating for it in certain pathological ways to be described later. It seems to be identified (p. 23) with a satisfactory adjustment between the individual's conscience and the moral standards current in the society in which he lives. But these standards may themselves be 'unrealistic'; and in that case the individual's conscience, if adjusted to them, will lack *external* realism. The latter is said to be relative to (i) the general state of knowledge and belief in a given society at a given time, and (ii) to its 'intellectual and moral climate, and the quality of the human beings who live in it'. Since both these factors gradually change, a set of moral standards which have been externally realistic may, unless they change concomitantly, become unrealistic.



(1.12) *Unhealthy Forms of Development.* The following are said to be typical unhealthy ways of development from the infantile proto-ethical stage :

(i) Instead of, or in addition to, the baby feeling guilty emotions towards its hostility to its mother, it may feel such emotions towards those of its impulses by checking which its mother incurred its hostility. In that case those impulses may be repressed instead of, or in addition to, its feelings of hostility towards its mother.

(ii) The repressed guilt-laden hatred, originally felt towards the mother for checking a certain impulse, may be extended or diverted to that impulse itself. If both the first and the second of these unhealthy developments should take place in an individual, he will feel towards certain of his impulses both a transferred emotion of *guilt* and a transferred emotion of *hatred* which will itself be the object of a guilty feeling.

(iii) Whilst it is 'normal and healthy' and 'perfectly realistic' to feel *some* degree of guilt towards one's hatred of those whom 'one must at all costs love', the degree of guilt felt may be too great. It is then described by Prof. Huxley as 'an excessive load which does not correspond with any reality'. This may lead to a sense of unworthiness and self-hatred which Prof. Huxley describes as 'quite irrational'.

(iv) It is alleged that when the degree of guilt felt is excessive the following further distortions are liable to ensue. (a) Suppose that the inordinate feeling of guilt has arisen through being afflicted with a fussy or domineering parent. Then the patient will be apt to model his dealings with himself on his parent's dealings with him, and thus to develop a finicky and over-severe conscience. (b) Another alternative, which may be either combined with or substituted for the first, is to model one's idea of God on one's early experiences of one's parents. God is then liable to be regarded as a fussy and domineering person, of irresistible power and super-human knowledge, mainly occupied in forbidding one to do what one would like to do. God will then be hated, but the hatred will be the object of a strong guilty feeling and will be largely repressed. (c) A person may get rid of an excessive load of guilt by thinking of himself as the innocent victim of unfortunate circumstances, of wicked and hostile individuals, or of an oppressive society.

(v) When a person's conscience has developed, whether healthily or unhealthily, he will find himself condemning some of his impulses and approving others of them. Now he may not be able to face the fact that he has certain strong impulses of which he strongly disapproves. He may then come to ignore their presence in himself and to imagine them to be present to a marked degree in certain other individuals or classes. His disapproval of such impulses, which prevents him from acknowledging their presence in himself, is then turned upon these other persons, who thus act as scapegoats or whipping-boys. He may then feel it to be his duty to loose upon

them, for their supposed moral defects, those impulses of cruelty and aggression in himself which he would otherwise have disapproved and kept in check.

(1.2) *Inferences from the above Theory of Conscience.* From the psycho-analytic theory of the development of conscience in the individual as he grows up Prof. Huxley draws the following conclusions:

(i) There are no innate moral principles or concepts. What is innate in a child is the tendency to love its mother in respect of most of her dealings with it and to hate her in respect of those of her acts which check its impulses; the tendency to feel guilty about this hostility and not about this love, and to repress or suppress the former and not the latter; and the tendency to extend the feeling of guilt to one member of other pairs of conflicting impulses. The kinds of action which eventually come to be regarded as right or wrong depend wholly on the individual's environment and are very largely determined by the influence of his mother. Even the general capacity to develop a conscience of some kind or other will not be fulfilled if the circumstances are unfavourable. It is asserted, *e.g.*, that persons who have had no mother or mother-substitute between the ages of one and three years from birth fail to develop a moral sense of any kind.

(ii) The psycho-analytic theory is alleged to provide an explanation for what Prof. Huxley calls the 'absolute, categorical, and other-worldly quality' of moral obligation. He asserts that this quality becomes attached to moral obligation through the following causes. (a) The fact that thoughts, emotions, and wishes to which the feeling of guilt is attached tend to be repressed into the unconscious, and do not merely take turns on an equal footing with their opposites in occupying consciousness or issuing in overt action. (b) The fact that the occasion on which guilt is first felt is that on which the infant discovers with a shock that there is a world outside himself which is not amenable to his wishes. It is alleged that a baby is originally in a state of 'magic solipsism', and that what first awakens it from this is the intrusion of the external world in the form of its mother demanding control over its primitive impulses.

(2) *General Account of Evolution.* The main points in Prof. Huxley's general account of evolution may be summarised as follows:

(i) It is a process of change which is 'creative' in two senses. (a) New and more complex levels of organisation are successively reached. (b) New possibilities for further development are opened up.

(ii) The growth in complexity of organisation is in general gradual, but there are occasional sudden and rapid changes to new and more comprehensive types of organisation. After any such critical point there are new emergent qualities and new methods of further evolution. The two most important critical points known to us are (a) the change from inorganic to living matter, and (b) the change

from pre-human to human life. After each such turning-point the area of further evolution tends to be restricted to those creatures which have taken the new turning and their descendants, but the tempo of evolution among them tends to be greatly accelerated.

(iii) Living beings are highly complex and unified material systems with the power to produce offspring which predominantly resemble their parents but have variations which may themselves be handed on. At their highest levels living organisms have a very considerable degree of self-regulation, they become to a large extent independent of variations in their environment, and they acquire appreciable powers of controlling it. At this end of the biological scale the presence of a mind something like the human mind is apparent for the first time.

(iv) At the level of life a new method of evolution emerges, *viz.* natural selection between competing variants. This greatly accelerates the process, and it is still further hastened by the development of bi-sexual reproduction with Mendelian recombination of genes.

(v) Purely organic evolution merges into evolution which is social and is to some extent deliberately controlled. This becomes possible when speech and conceptual thinking have developed. Then and not till then the results of experience become transmissible, tradition becomes cumulative, and deliberate training becomes possible. This leads to a new type of organisation, *viz.* that of a self-perpetuating society of conscious individuals, and it becomes possible to take deliberate control of further evolution.

(vi) A line of evolution may be said to be 'progressive' so long as there remains a capacity to reach a higher level of organisation along that line which will not itself cut out the possibility of still further advance. In organic evolution this requires all-round flexibility as opposed to one-sided specialisation. The latter leads to a blind alley, and thereafter only minor variations are possible. Prof. Huxley says that all the main lines of purely organic evolution seem to have ended in such blind alleys a very long time ago. The field of further evolution on earth has now been restricted to one species, *viz.* men; and in them it is social and thought-determined, not blindly biological. But the possible tempo has been enormously increased.

(vii) Prof. Huxley asserts that, after the level of social and thought-determined evolution has been reached, two important new features emerge: (a) Many of the experiences which now become available for the first time have 'intrinsic value'; and (b) it becomes possible to 'introduce faith, courage, love of truth, goodness—moral purpose—into evolution'. (I am not at all sure what Prof. Huxley understands or wishes his readers to understand by either of these statements.)

(3) *Evolution of the Moral Codes of Societies.* The moral standards prevalent in various societies and at various stages of a single society

are roughly correlated with the stage reached by the society in its evolution. But Prof. Huxley mentions, and tries to account for, certain exceptions to this general rule. He says that careful study of a number of primitive communities has shown that there is no close correlation between, e.g. the degree of competitiveness or of co-operation enjoined by the moral code of such a community and the prevalence of competition or co-operation in the life of it. Similar facts, he says, have been observed about peaceableness and aggressiveness. It appears that peaceableness may be morally approved in a community which is predominantly aggressive, and aggressiveness in one that is predominantly peaceable.

He tells us that a more detailed study of such facts discloses that all such societies are primitive, small, culturally isolated, and on the same general level of social evolution. Now it is found that small and isolated species of fairly simple plants or animals are liable to develop and propagate variations which are not specially adapted to their circumstances and their mode of life. The reason alleged is that, in the absence of severe competition, random variations have a fair chance of surviving even when they are not useful.

Suppose, however, that we confine our comparisons to communities which are either (i) at quite different levels of culture, or (ii) highly advanced but on very different lines of development. Then, he says, we shall find that there is a high positive association between those types of character and action which are morally approved in a community and those which are favourably relevant to its chief functions.

Prof. Huxley distinguishes the following main levels :

(i) *Pre-agricultural Societies*. Here morality is chiefly concerned with the propitiation of supposed super-natural beings, the harnessing of supposed magical forces, and the solidarity of the group. The principal subjects of moral approval and disapproval are acts and sentiments connected with totem and taboo, and the acts which are approved or disapproved are viewed mainly in the light of their supposed magical efficacy.

(ii) *Early Civilised Societies*. Here the chief subjects of moral approval or disapproval are those which are concerned with class-domination and the rivalries of groups. Moral codes tend to be regarded as expressions of the will of God, and morality is closely connected with religion.

(iii) *Later Civilised Societies*. The most important development here is the appearance for the first time of a set of moral principles which are supposed not to be restricted in their application to the members of a certain community as a whole or to those of a certain group within it, but are held to apply to every human being as such. Prof. Huxley asserts that the first known appearance of such a universalistic moral code was in about 500 B.C. Such a code has generally been thought of as fixed for all time and independent of local and temporal variations in circumstances. Prof. Huxley

thinks that this attitude has been fostered by the uncritical use of certain abstract nouns, such as *The Good*, which are really nothing but 'convenient pigeon-holes for a variety of qualities which have *nothing in common but a certain emotive quality*' (my italics). He also considers that the belief in the immutability of the principles of universalistic morality has been buttressed by regarding them as expressions of the immutable will of God.

In all advanced societies there have been several more or less distinct moral codes which partly conflict and partly support each other. Among these Prof. Huxley enumerates the following: (a) An official code imposed by a ruling class to ensure the stability of their own position; (b) the working code of the ordinary citizen; (c) the codes of certain oppressed classes or minorities, seeking consolation or revolutionary change; (d) a code concerned with securing personal salvation as an escape from inner conflict or outer violence and misery; (e) the code of an 'impossible perfection'; and (f) what he calls 'the true ethics of disciplined and developed goodness and sainthood'. Prof. Huxley alleges that there is nothing common and peculiar to all these except that they are concerned with 'the labels of rightness and wrongness'.

(4) *Evolution as a Clue to an Objective Moral Standard.* Prof. Huxley says that we are left with the following problem: 'How can we be sure that the objects to which our moral sense affixes the labels of felt rightness and wrongness are *in fact* right and wrong?' So far we have been told only of the adaptation of particular moral codes to particular kinds of society. Is there any criterion for judging whether the labels 'right' and 'wrong' are *correctly* attached? Again, have we any right to say that one adaptation or one society is *better than* another? He asserts that a study of the course of evolution provides answers to such questions and enables us to discover 'independent ethical standards' in three different but interconnected regions, *viz.* nature as a whole, human society, and the human individual.

So far as I can see, Prof. Huxley bases his moral code on certain ultimate judgments of value. I will collect at this point his main statements on this topic.

(i) Men find that some of the possibilities which are realisable at the human level of evolution 'have value in and for themselves'.

(ii) Among these they assign a higher value to those which are either (a) 'more intrinsically or permanently satisfying', or (b) 'involve a greater degree of perfection'.

(iii) Those evolutionary trends which are likely to lead to such intrinsically valuable possibilities being realised are judged to be 'the most desirable direction of evolution'.

(iv) It is said to be evident 'on evolutionary grounds' that the individual is 'higher than the state or the social organism'. Again, we are told that 'the rightly developed individual is, and will continue to be, the highest product of evolution'. It is explained that

the phrase 'rightly developed', in this context, is to cover both (a) the full all-round development of a person's powers, and (b) the one-sided development of any special capacity in which he is capable of excelling. Prof. Huxley realises that there may be a conflict between developing a certain talent to the utmost and performing one's ordinary duties towards one's family, colleagues, country, etc. He does not explicitly mention, what is equally obvious, that there may be a conflict between all-round self-development and the cultivation of a particular talent to the highest degree of which it is capable.

The ground which is given for holding that an individual is higher than any social group is that the 'possibilities which are of value for their own sake . . . are not experienced by society as a unit'.

(v) In a group of individuals it is desirable that there should be the maximum of variety that is compatible with the unity of the group as a whole. 'It is not uniformity which our evolutionary analysis shows to be right', says Prof. Huxley, 'but the maximum of variety-in-unity'.

Prof. Huxley's main pronouncements about what is *right* may be summarised as follows:

(i) The most fundamental proposition seems to be that it is right to 'aim at whatever will promote the increasingly full realisation of increasingly high values'.

(ii) There is also a principle of equality. It is right that there should be universal equality of opportunity for development. This is said to follow from the fact that 'the right development of an individual is an evolutionary end in itself'. But there appears to be an independent argument for it which would make it a derivative principle, *viz.* that equality of opportunity leads to the maximum of variety.

(iii) It is right (a) to realise new possibilities in evolution, especially those which are intrinsically valuable; (b) to respect human individuality and to encourage its further development; and (c) to construct such a social organisation as will best subserve (a) and (b).

From these principles Prof. Huxley draws the conclusion that the right course at any moment will be a compromise between one which would wholly sacrifice future possibilities of further development to the fullest realisation of existing possibilities and one which would wholly sacrifice the latter to the former. Social organisation should be designed to encourage change in desirable directions, but at any moment there will be an optimum rate of change in those directions.

(5) *Special Features of Evolutionary Ethics.* Prof. Huxley realises that a good many more or less educated persons in England and the United States and the Dominions might be prepared to assent, with minor qualifications, to most of what he has said about the sort of things which have value and the sort of actions which are right.

But they might be inclined to ask: Is not this just the ethics of



'Christianised Liberalism'? What has the appeal to evolution done for us?

There would seem to be two different questions here. (i) Has the appeal to evolution provided any reason, which was not already available, for accepting the judgments of value and of obligation enumerated above? (ii) Does it provide us with any new or modified judgments of value or of obligation?

To the first question Prof. Huxley answers that the study of evolution has provided an *inductive basis* for what had already been guessed by religious moralists, viz. a universalistic morality based on the ultimate and intrinsic value of human-personality.

In considering the second question Prof. Huxley enumerates what he takes to be the main points of likeness and the main points of unlikeness between the evolutionary moral code and that of 'Christianised Liberalism'. He says that the only likenesses are the following: (i) That both codes are in principle *universalistic*. I take this to mean that each requires that any two persons shall be treated alike unless it can be shown, to the satisfaction of an unbiassed third party, that there are such differences between themselves or their circumstances that better results on the whole are likely to follow from treating them differently. (ii) That both take the value of the *individual* to be primary and paramount. (iii) The two codes will further resemble each other in any principles which follow from (i) or (ii) or the conjunction of both of them.

The main differences between the two systems of morality are said to be the following: (i) The moral standards or criteria of 'Christianised Liberalism' are accepted on authority or on the grounds of an alleged revelation, and are therefore fixed once and for all. Those of the evolutionist can be modified and developed. (ii) The moral standards of the evolutionary system are 'dynamic', whilst those of its rival are 'static'. This seems to mean that the moral code of 'Christianised Liberalism' takes the nature of human individuals and human societies to be now fixed and henceforth susceptible only of minor fluctuations, and legislates only for the relations of such individuals in such societies. The moral code of the evolutionist is concerned, not only with this, but also with the rights and wrongs of *processes of change* which carry individuals and societies from one stage of evolution to another.

From these primary differences Prof. Huxley claims to derive the following secondary ones. The evolutionist will lay more stress than the 'Christianised Liberal' on (i) the obligation to plan for *social change*; (ii) the value of *knowledge* as a means to controlling future evolution; (iii) the value of *art*, both as introducing new possibilities of intrinsically valuable experience and as providing the chief means by which emotional, as distinct from intellectual, experiences may be shared; and (iv) certain kinds of *personal religion* as opening the way to attaining certain kinds of 'satisfying

experience and desirable being'. On the other hand, we are told, the evolutionary code condemns practices aimed at securing salvation in a supernatural other life, in so far as these may retard or oppose 'right social change'.

(6) *Comments and Criticisms.* I hope that the above is a fair and a reasonably complete synopsis of the main points in Prof. Huxley's theory. I shall now proceed to make some comments and criticisms upon it.

(6.1) *Development of Conscience in the Individual.* I will begin with one general remark. Of all branches of empirical psychology that which is concerned with what goes on in the minds of babies must, from the nature of the case, be one of the most precarious. Babies, whilst they remain such, cannot tell us what their experiences are; and all statements made by grown persons about their own infantile experiences on the basis of ostensible memory are certainly inadequate and probably distorted. The whole of this part of psychology therefore is, and will always remain, a mere mass of speculations about infantile mental processes, put forward to explain certain features in the lives of grown persons and incapable in principle of any independent check or verification. Such speculations are of the weakest kind known to science.

The next general remark that I would make is this. The connexion between the psycho-analytic and the evolutionary part of Prof. Huxley's theory is by no means clear. The former is concerned entirely with conation and emotion, the latter professes to supply a criterion for judging what is really right and really wrong, i.e. it is concerned with cognition. How are the two inter-related? I will try now to clear this up.

There is evidently a close positive association between what a person calls 'right' and what he feels morally obliged to do and guilty in omitting to do, and between what he calls 'wrong' and what he feels morally obliged to avoid and guilty in doing. A person tends to feel *guilty* (as distinct from merely apprehensive, embarrassed, disgusted, etc.) when and only when he knows himself to be acting or wishing or feeling, or believes himself to have acted or wished or felt, in a way which he would call '*morally wrong*'. Conversely, a person tends to call an act or wish or feeling of his '*morally wrong*' only if his contemporary awareness or his subsequent memory of it is qualified by a feeling of *guilt* (as distinct from one of mere apprehension, embarrassment, disgust, etc.).

Now, it might be held that when a person calls an act or experience of his 'wrong' he is either (a) merely expressing his feeling of guilt, as a person who is angry might express that feeling by exclaiming 'Blast!'; or (b) merely stating the fact that he is feeling guilty, as a person might state that he is feeling angry by uttering the sentence, 'I am angry'. I will call these two alternatives respectively the *Interjectional* and the *Autobiographical* analysis of

what a person is doing when he calls one of his own acts or experiences 'wrong'.

It is quite clear that Prof. Huxley could not consistently accept either of these analyses. For, in the first place, he asks: 'How can we be sure that the objects to which our moral sense affixes the labels of felt rightness and wrongness are *in fact* right and wrong?'; and he claims that a study of the course of evolution provides an answer to such questions. Plainly the question would be meaningless and the answer ridiculous if, when a person calls one of his actions 'right' or 'wrong', he is only expressing a certain emotion towards it or is only stating that he is feeling such an emotion towards it. On the first alternative the speaker is not expressing an opinion at all, and so there can be no question of his being correct or incorrect in calling the action 'right' or 'wrong'. On the second alternative he is making an autobiographical statement about his own present feeling towards the action. Such a statement is hardly likely to be false unless he is deliberately lying; and, if it can reasonably be questioned, it is plain that a study of the course of evolution is completely irrelevant to testing its truth or falsehood.

Secondly, Prof. Huxley evidently holds that the emotion of guilt is *appropriate* to some kinds of action or experience and *inappropriate* to others, and that it may be felt in an *ordinate* or an *inordinate* degree towards those objects to which it is appropriate to feel it. For he says that guilt is an appropriate emotion for a person to feel towards his hatred of his 'beloved mother', and more generally towards his hatred of those whom 'he must at all costs love'. And he tells us that, whilst it is 'perfectly realistic to feel *some* degree of guilt at hating one's beloved mother', it is possible to feel a degree of guilt which is 'excessive', which 'does not correspond to any reality', and which is 'quite irrational'. From this I conclude that he holds that it is appropriate to feel guilt towards those, and only those, of one's actions and experiences which are 'in fact' wrong; and that there is some proper proportion between the degree of wrongness and the degree of guilt felt.

It seems certain then that Prof. Huxley must hold that, when a person utters the sentence, 'So-and-so is wrong', he is not just expressing an emotion but is making a judgment; and that in this judgment he is ascribing to so-and-so a predicate which has no special reference to his present feelings towards so-and-so.

I suppose, therefore, that the connexion between the psycho-analytic and the evolutionary part of the lecture must be this. The former claims to explain how a person comes to attach feelings of guilt of such and such degrees to such and such of his actions, desires, and feelings; and to show what function this attachment of guilt performs in his general development. The conclusion of it is that a feeling of guilt may become attached to anything, wrong or right or indifferent, and that its intensity need bear no proportion to the

degree of wrongness of the actions or experiences to which it becomes attached. A person will be inclined to believe that those and only those of his actions and experiences to which he has attached a feeling of guilt are wrong, and to believe that the degree of wrongness of each is measured by the intensity of the guilty feeling which he has attached to it. But in believing an action or experience of his to be right or wrong he is ascribing to it a certain predicate which has no special reference to his feelings towards it. Whether or not it has this predicate, and the degree to which it has it if it has it at all, are questions which can be decided only by criteria which are elicited in the evolutionary part of the lecture by a study of the course of evolution.

If this account of Prof. Huxley's theory as a whole be correct, we must notice that one important question concerning the development of conscience is ignored by it. How does the individual acquire the notions of right and wrong? According to the evolutionary part of the theory when a person calls one of his actions or experiences 'right' or 'wrong' he is not just talking about his own emotions. He is ascribing to that action or experience (whether correctly or incorrectly) a predicate whose presence or absence can be tested by an objective evolutionary test. If so, he must have an *idea* of that predicate; and nothing that has been said in the psycho-analytic part of the theory about the emotion of guilt and its gradual transference from hatred of the mother to other acts and experiences takes us a step towards explaining the origin of that idea. It is obvious that no theory which is entirely in terms of a person's emotions will explain how he comes to attach to the words 'right' and 'wrong' a meaning which is not definable in terms of his emotions.

It is no reproach to a theory that it does not explain everything; but it is very important that it should not be thought to explain more than it does. Therefore I shall state explicitly what seem to me to be two presuppositions of the present theory. (i) It presupposes that the notions of right and wrong are either innate or are acquired by the individual in some way which it does not explain. (ii) It presupposes that a person has a tendency (a) to ascribe wrongness to those and only those of his actions and experiences towards which he feels an emotion of guilt, and (b) to ascribe to an act or experience a degree of wrongness which is measured by the intensity of the guilty emotion which he feels towards it.

I think that the theory can be illustrated by means of an analogy with the emotion of fear. The theory maintains that the native and primary object of a person's guilty emotion is his hostility to his mother. We are told by psychologists that the native and primary object of fear in infants is sudden loud noises. The guilty emotion may be extended or diverted from a person's hostility towards his mother to any of his other acts or experiences, right, wrong, or indifferent. Similarly, fear may be extended or diverted to almost

any object, whether dangerous, harmless, or beneficial. Therefore the fact that a person feels guilty about X and not about Y, though it will certainly tend to make him *believe* that X is wrong and that Y is not, is no guarantee that these beliefs are correct. And the fact that he feels more guilty about X than about Z, though it will certainly tend to make him *believe* that X is more wrong than Z, is no guarantee that this is true. Similarly, a person may be frightened of X and not of Y, and may be more frightened of X than of Z. This will certainly tend to make him think that X is dangerous and that Y is not, and that X is more dangerous than Z. But it may in fact be the case that Y is dangerous and X is not, or that Z is more dangerous than X. It might be held to be 'reasonable' that a person should feel fear only towards what is really dangerous, and that the intensity of his fear should be proportionate to the real degree of danger. Similarly, it is in some sense 'reasonable' that a person should feel guilt only towards those of his acts and experiences which are really wrong, and that the intensity of his guilty feeling should be proportionate to the real degree of their wrongness.

Perhaps this notion of 'reasonableness' or 'appropriateness' might be analysed somewhat further on the following lines. Prof. Huxley might say that the emotion which the average baby feels towards the average mother in respect of the vast majority of her dealings with it is *love*. It is only in respect of a special class of occasional acts, viz. those which check certain of its impulses, that the average baby feels hatred and hostility towards the average mother. Therefore love is the 'normal' emotion for a baby to feel towards its mother, in the sense that it is the emotion which is habitually felt. Hatred towards its mother is 'abnormal', in the sense that it is opposite in kind to the emotion which is normally felt by it towards the same object and that it is felt only on certain isolated special occasions.

Prof. Huxley might add that love, and the actions which spring from it, are more conducive to the harmonious development of the individual and the stability of society than are hate and the actions which spring from it. A human being is at first wholly dependent on its mother; throughout a long childhood he remains predominantly dependent on her and on others; and throughout his whole life he will be largely dependent on the good-will of his fellows. He will not receive such support for long, and he will be incapable of benefiting from it, unless he is on the whole docile, co-operative, and friendly. Now, unless certain of his impulses are checked at an early age, and unless he largely represses his instinctive reactions of hostility against those who check them, he will become an object of disgust and enmity to those with whom he has to live. To say that a guilty feeling is 'appropriate' to a person's hostility towards his mother and 'inappropriate' to his love for her might mean that (a) it tends to repress anything to which it is attached, and (b) the

repression of the former is, whilst that of the latter is not, conducive to the harmonious development of the individual and the stability of society.

Finally, Prof. Huxley might give the following account of the distinction between a 'reasonable' and an 'unreasonable' degree of guilty feeling. He might compare the feeling of guilt to a medicine which tastes nasty and has various collateral ill-effects on general health. The feeling is unpleasant in itself and depressing and cramping in its effects. It will be too weak if it is not strong enough to repress the hostility to the mother. But, if it is present in more than the minimal degree needed for that and similar purposes, it will hamper rather than forward the all-round development of the individual and his adjustment to society. So the 'right' or 'reasonable' degree of guilty feeling is the smallest dose that suffices for the function which Prof. Huxley ascribes to it.

I will end this part of my comments with the following observations. Any theory which claims to trace the development of conscience in the individual is faced with at least two questions: (i) How does the individual acquire the *notions* of moral rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness, etc.? (ii) How does he come to *apply* these notions to the particular objects to which he does eventually apply them, i.e. to count such and such actions as right, such and such others as wrong, and so on? I have tried to show that the psycho-analytic theory supplies no answer to the first question. So far as it goes, moral rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness, might be simple, unanalysable characteristics, and the disposition to form concepts of them might be innate in the human mind. In that case the only answer that could be given to the first question would be to describe the conditions which are severally necessary and jointly sufficient to stimulate this innate disposition into activity and cause the individual actually to think of these characteristics. But, even on this supposition, there might be no innate *moral principles* and even no innate *moral biases*. A person might be equally ready to attach the notion of right or wrong, good or evil, to anything; and the particular ways in which he did in fact come to apply them might be wholly determined by the conditions to which he was subjected in early childhood.

Now, as we have seen, Prof. Huxley does hold, on the basis of the psycho-analytic theory, that there are no innate moral principles. For, if I have interpreted him correctly, he holds that an individual's earliest judgments of right and wrong are completely determined by and moulded upon his feelings of guilt, and that the extension of his feelings of guilt from his hatred of his mother to any other of his acts or experiences is entirely determined by the influences which are brought to bear on him in early childhood. Prof. Huxley does not explicitly consider the possibility of what I have called 'innate moral bias'. By this I mean the possibility that the human mind may be so constituted that attempts to make a person feel guilty



about certain kinds of act or experience might 'go against the grain' and seldom be wholly successful, whilst attempts to make him feel thus about certain other kinds of act or experience might 'go with the grain'. There is some *prima facie* evidence for this, but I do not know whether it would survive critical investigation.

I think that Prof. Huxley's conclusions about how an individual comes to have the beliefs which he does have about what is right and what is wrong might be compared in certain respects to the known facts about the development of intelligible speech as a person grows up. The power to speak is not innate in human beings; but the power to acquire that power may fairly be said to be innate, since the vast majority of men do learn to speak whilst no other creatures can be taught to do so. Nevertheless, a child will not acquire the power to speak unless it is surrounded by other persons who talk to it, listen to it, and train it. Again, the particular language which a child will first talk if it ever learns to speak at all depends entirely on the particular way in which it is conditioned by those who train it in its early years. Of course other languages may be learned deliberately in later life; but, if so, they will probably be spoken with the 'accent' of the language which was first acquired spontaneously in infancy.

On Prof. Huxley's theory the contents of different moral codes might be compared to different languages, or perhaps more profitably to the characteristic grammatical structures of different groups of languages, e.g. Indo-European, Semitic, Chinese, etc. In this connexion it is worth remarking that the grammatical rules which a person follows correctly but unwittingly in speaking his native tongue may be of extreme subtlety, as becomes apparent when they are formulated by grammarians and have to be learned and applied deliberately by a foreigner. There is obviously some analogy to this in the highly complex rules of totem and taboo which anthropologists laboriously elicit from the practices of certain primitive communities.

(6.2) *The notions of 'Internal' and 'External Realism'*. So far as I can see, the essential points here are the following: A person's conscience is internally realistic if (i) he feels guilty about those and only those of his acts and experiences which are *commonly believed* to be wrong in the society in which he has to live, and (ii) if the intensity of the guilty emotion which he feels towards any act or experience is roughly proportionate to the degree of wrongness which is *commonly ascribed* in that society to acts or experience of that kind. Thus internal realism is necessary and sufficient to ensure a satisfactory adjustment between an individual's conscience and the moral code prevalent in the society in which he lives.

Now, whether an act of a certain kind is really right or wrong will largely depend on the nature of the effects which acts of that kind are likely to produce either severally or collectively. And these effects in turn will depend, not only on the nature of the act, but

also on the circumstances, both material and mental, in which it is done.

Suppose, now, that a person judges a certain act to be *right*. Then it may be that, *if* it would have the effects which he believes that it would have, it *would* be right. In that case I shall say that his judgment is 'ethically reasonable', even if he is mistaken about the effects that it will have. On the other hand, it may be that, if it would have the effects which he believes it would have, it *would not* be right but would be indifferent or wrong. Then I shall say that his judgment that it is right is 'ethically unreasonable', even if he is correct in his beliefs about the effects of the action. If he is correct in his judgment about the circumstances in which an act is done and the effects which it will have, I shall say that he is 'factually correct'; if not, I shall say that he is 'factually incorrect'. It is plain then that, if a person makes the judgment, 'So-and-so is right', there are four possibilities, *viz.* (i) that he is being ethically reasonable and factually correct, or (ii) ethically reasonable but factually incorrect, or (iii) ethically unreasonable but factually correct, or (iv) ethically unreasonable and factually incorrect. Similar remarks apply, *mutatis mutandis*, if a person makes the judgment, 'So-and-so is wrong'.

Now, there is no doubt that what Prof. Huxley calls 'external realism' is closely connected with what I have called 'ethical reasonableness'. If a person makes a moral judgment which is ethically reasonable I shall describe it as 'realistic relative to his factual information', no matter whether that information is adequate, correct or incorrect. If, in addition, his relevant factual information is adequate and correct, I shall describe his moral judgment as 'absolutely realistic'.

It is evident that the moral code of a society might not be realistic even in relation to the factual information which is common in that society. It may never have been so. And, even if at some time in the past it was realistic in relation to the relevant factual information then available, it may have ossified at that stage, whilst the relevant factual information available has since been extended and corrected. I have no doubt that a great deal in the current moral code about sexual matters is unrealistic, from the one cause or the other, in relation to the relevant factual information at present available.

Even if the moral code of a society were completely realistic relative to the factual information which is common in that society at a given time, it might not be absolutely realistic; for that information might be either inadequate or inaccurate. And, even if it were absolutely realistic at a certain time, there is no guarantee that it would remain so. For conditions might change, and similar acts performed in widely different conditions might have consequences which were good in one set of conditions and bad in the other.

Obviously the ideal position for an individual is that he should live in a society whose moral code is absolutely realistic, and that his

conscience should be fully adjusted to it. But neither of those conditions will ever be completely fulfilled. Suppose that one had to train a child who one knew would be obliged to live in a society whose moral code was largely unrealistic. Then one would have to compromise between the two evils of giving him a conscience adjusted to the society in which he is to live and therefore largely unrealistic, or a conscience which is highly realistic and therefore largely out of adjustment to the society in which he is to live. This is by no means a merely academic problem for an intelligent and well-intentioned parent or teacher who has to compromise as best he can between producing contented philistines or embittered prigs.

(6.3) *Objective Rightness and Wrongness*. Prof. Huxley's theory of the nature of rightness is a particular form of a very ancient and familiar doctrine, *viz.* Utilitarianism. For it takes intrinsic value as the primary notion in ethics, and it makes the definition or the criterion of the rightness of an act to be its tendency to produce or to conserve or to increase what is intrinsically valuable. There is, so far as I can see, no special connexion between this account of rightness and the theory of evolution. Utilitarianism was put forward, elaborated, criticised, and defended long before the theory of evolution was thought of, and all the best arguments for it are quite independent of that theory and of the facts on which it is based.

In my opinion the only relevance of the facts of evolution to Utilitarianism is the following. The most serious rival to Utilitarianism is what I will call 'Intuitionism'. This is the theory that the rightness or wrongness of certain kinds of act, *e.g.* promise-keeping, lying, etc., depends, not on their tendency to produce consequences which are good or bad, as the case may be, but on their intrinsic nature as acts. *E.g.* this theory holds that the non-ethical characteristic of being an act of promise-keeping necessarily involves the ethical characteristic of being right, and that the non-ethical characteristic of being an act of deliberate deception necessarily involves the ethical characteristic of being wrong, just as the property of being an equilateral triangle necessarily involves that of being an equi-angular triangle. Such a theory of the nature of the connexion between rightness or wrongness, on the one hand, and the various right-making or wrong-making characteristics, on the other, is generally combined with the *epistemological* theory that such connexions are immediately obvious to careful inspection, *i.e.* that they not only *are* intrinsically necessary but also can be *seen* to be so by any rational being who reflects on the terms. Now anything that tended to weaken this theory would *pro tanto* strengthen Utilitarianism which is its most formidable rival. I suspect that the only relevance of the psycho-analytic account of the development of conscience to the Utilitarian part of Prof. Huxley's theory is that, if it were true, it would cut away the grounds for the rival doctrine of Intuitionism. On the psycho-analytic theory it would be very improbable that a person really does see any necessary

connexion between the nature of certain acts, such as promise-keeping or lying, and their rightness or wrongness; and there would be a psychological explanation of the fact that many people are inclined to think that they do so. But, for reasons which I have given, I consider that the evidence for this theory of conscience is too weak to make it a strong weapon against Intuitionism.

Prof. Huxley enunciates the general principle of Utilitarianism in the formula that it is right to 'aim at whatever will promote the increasingly full realisation of increasingly high values'. But, as Bentham saw, and as Sidgwick insisted, the general principle needs to be supplemented by some principle about *distribution*. For our acts contribute not only to produce good and bad experiences and good or bad individuals, but also to determine *which* individuals shall have good experiences and which shall have bad ones. It will be remembered that Bentham formulated the distributive principle, 'Everyone to count for one and no-one to count for more than one', whilst Sidgwick enunciates several principles of impartiality in the distribution of goods and evils. Prof. Huxley also has a principle of equality. He says that it is right that there should be universal equality of opportunity for development.

He alleges that this follows from the fact that 'the right development of an individual is an evolutionary end in itself'. I do not see that the addition of the adjective 'evolutionary' to the substantive 'end-in-itself' adds any weight to this argument. I am not sure that the conclusion is true, and I do not see precisely how it follows from the premiss. It is plainly conceivable that circumstances might exist in which if equal opportunities were given to all members of a society none of them could develop very far; whilst, if the opportunities given were distributed most bountifully among those who had the greatest innate capacity, much greater aggregate development would result. It is certainly not obvious to me that, in such circumstances, opportunities for development ought to be distributed equally. And I should like to see the steps by which it is supposed to follow from the premiss that the right development of an individual is an end in itself. I suspect that some additional premisses would be needed, and that they would not be particularly plausible if they were brought into the light.

Whether the argument in support of the principle of equality of opportunity from the premiss that an individual is an end-in-itself be valid or invalid it is not a Utilitarian argument. But Prof. Huxley does also support the principle on Utilitarian grounds. He says that equality of opportunity leads to maximum variety, and he holds that a group of inter-related individuals is in the best state possible when there is in it a 'maximum of variety-in-unity'. It seems to me quite uncertain whether equality of opportunity for development would necessarily lead to the maximum variety possible with a given amount of resources. If the available resources were small, there could be only very slight development for

anyone if the opportunities were equal, and this would seem to involve a fairly uniform low level of attainment. If the same resources were distributed unequally, *e.g.* if they were used to enrich a small class of aristocrats with a taste for being patrons of art and learning and sport, it is quite likely that far greater variety would result.

(6.4) *Intrinsic Values*. Utilitarianism, which is a theory about the nature and criteria of *rightness and wrongness*, does not logically entail any particular theory about *intrinsic goodness and badness*. But it presupposes some view or other on this latter subject. So we must now consider Prof. Huxley's opinions about intrinsic value.

In Section 4 above I have collected all that I could find of Prof. Huxley's views on this topic. I will begin by remarking that there are three main questions which may be asked about intrinsic value.

(i) What is the right analysis of statements of the form 'So-and-so is intrinsically good (or bad)'? Do they, as their grammatical form suggests, express judgments in which the speaker ascribes a predicate to a subject? Or is this a delusion, and do they merely express a certain emotion which the person who utters them is feeling? Again, if they do express judgments, what is the nature of the predicate which they ascribe to a subject? Is it simple and unanalysable? If not, how should it be analysed and defined? (ii) If intrinsic value or disvalue be a predicate, of what kinds of subject can it be intelligibly predicated? Or, if the Interjectional Analysis be correct, towards what kinds of object can the emotion be felt which is expressed by sentences which *seem* to ascribe intrinsic value to a subject? (iii) If intrinsic value or disvalue is a predicate, what are the non-ethical characteristics of a subject which make it intrinsically good or bad, as the case may be? Or, if the Interjectional Analysis be correct, what are the non-ethical characteristics of an object which call forth the emotion which is expressed by sentences which *seem* to ascribe intrinsic value to a subject?

(i) I think it is certain that Prof. Huxley holds that such sentences as 'So-and-so is intrinsically good (or bad)' do express judgments in which a predicate is ascribed to a subject, and do not merely express an emotion which the speaker is feeling. But I have no idea whether he thinks that the characteristic denoted by the phrase 'intrinsically good (or bad)' is simple or complex. And I have no idea what he thinks to be the correct analysis of it if it be complex.

(ii) It seems certain that Prof. Huxley holds that intrinsic value can be predicated intelligibly of (a) certain experiences, and (b) human individuals. I am not sure whether he holds that it can also be predicated of (c) certain groups of inter-related human beings.

Some of his statements, if taken literally, seem to imply that he holds (c). He says, *e.g.*, that the individual is 'higher than the state or the social organism'. Now, if such a comparison can be made at all, it implies that both an individual and a society can have intrinsic value. What precisely it means is not clear to me.

Does it mean that the value of *any* individual is greater than that of *any* human society? Or does it mean that the value of the *best* individual is greater than that of the *best* society? Whatever it may mean, two reasons are given for it. One is that individuals have experiences, whilst no group of individuals can literally have an experience; and that certain experiences are of very great intrinsic value. The other is that the conclusion is evident 'on evolutionary grounds'.

I find all this very unsatisfactory. Consider the following three questions. (a) Can intrinsic value be predicated intelligibly of certain groups of inter-related individuals? (b) If it can, can the value of such a group and that of an individual be intelligibly compared in respect of magnitude? (c) If so, is the value of any individual, however bad, necessarily greater than that of any group, however good? Or is the value of the best possible individual necessarily greater than that of the best possible group? The mere fact that only an individual can literally have experiences and that certain experiences have very great intrinsic value, does not seem to me to settle any of these questions. And, if there be 'evolutionary grounds' for answering the third question affirmatively in either of its forms, I have failed to discover them in Prof. Huxley's lecture and I am quite unable to imagine for myself what they may be.

(iii) About the non-ethical characteristics whose presence confers intrinsic value on the things which possess them Prof. Huxley's views seem to be as follows:

(a) He does not explicitly enumerate the characteristics which he thinks confer intrinsic value on *experiences*. He contents himself with mentioning certain experiences which are commonly held to be intrinsically valuable, *e.g.* certain æsthetic and religious experiences. But he does mention two characteristics which he thinks confer a higher value on an experience the more fully and intensely they are present in it. These are the property of being 'intrinsically or permanently satisfying' and that of 'involving a degree of perfection'.

I do not clearly understand what is meant by 'perfection' in this context. It seems tautologous, and is certainly not illuminating, to say that the more perfection an experience has the more valuable it will be. The notion of being 'intrinsically or permanently satisfying' also needs a great deal of further analysis and elucidation. The first move would be to attempt to draw and justify a distinction between what 'really would satisfy' a person and what he 'thinks he wants'. At the next move we should have to raise the question whether a stupid or a cruel or a lustful person might not get 'real' satisfaction from experiences which we should hesitate to call intrinsically good. All these questions have been commonplaces of ethical discussion for some two thousand years, and I cannot see that any fresh light has been thrown on them by reference to evolution.



(b) Intrinsic value is conferred on an individual by a combination of the fullest all-round development of his powers with the special development of any particular talents in which he is capable of excelling. This, again, is a form of a very ancient and familiar doctrine. It goes back to Plato and was put forward in England in the nineteenth century by moralists of the school of Green and Bradley and Bosanquet under the name of 'self-realisation'. Its strong and weak points have been very fully canvassed, and I do not think that evolution has anything fresh to add to the discussion.

(c) If Prof. Huxley does hold that intrinsic value can be significantly ascribed to certain groups of individuals, it is plain that he thinks that what gives intrinsic value to such a group is a combination of individual variety with collective unity.

It is useful in this connexion to bear in mind McTaggart's distinction between the value in a group and the value of a group. I think it is quite possible that, if the distinction were put to him, Prof. Huxley would deny that there is goodness or badness of a group, and would say that variety-in-unity is important only as making for maximum goodness in a group, i.e. for making it consist to the greatest possible degree of good individuals enjoying good experiences.

(6.5) *The Relevance of Evolution to Ethics*. There are two questions to be discussed, and it is important to be clear about the connexions and disconnexions between them. (i) What bearing, if any, has knowledge of the facts of evolution on the question of what is *intrinsically good or bad*? (ii) What bearing, if any, has it on the question of what is *right or wrong*?

It is important to notice that, even if such knowledge had no bearing at all on the first question, it would almost certainly have a bearing on the second. This would be so even if Utilitarianism were false, but it is more obviously so if it is true. The reason is as follows. On any theory of right and wrong which is worth consideration one of our duties, and a very important one, is to produce as much good and as little evil as we can. If Utilitarianism is true, this is our *only* ultimate duty and all our other duties can be derived from it. If Utilitarianism is false, we have other duties not derivable from this which may conflict with and limit it, but it will remain an urgent obligation. Now, in order to decide whether the effects of an action will be good or evil we must first know *what* its effects will be. This is a factual and not an ethical question, and the answer to it depends on the circumstances in which the action is done and the relevant laws of nature. It is plain that knowledge of the laws of evolution may be highly relevant in attempting to foresee the large-scale and long-term consequences of certain types of action. Such knowledge may also suggest possibilities which would not otherwise have been contemplated, and it may rule out as causally impossible certain results at which it might otherwise have seemed reasonable to aim. I do not think that any moralist would deny that evolution has this kind of relevance to the question of what is right or wrong.

If knowledge of the facts of evolution had a bearing on the question of what is intrinsically good or bad, it would have an additional relevance to the question of what is right or wrong. This would be the case on any view of rightness and wrongness which makes beneficence to be one of our duties, and it would be most obvious on the Utilitarian view which makes beneficence to be our only fundamental duty. For, on the present hypothesis, a knowledge of the facts of evolution would help to tell us, not only *what* the effects of certain actions would be, but also whether such and such effects, if they were produced, would be *intrinsically good or bad*. So the question that remains is whether knowledge of the facts of evolution has any bearing on the question of what is intrinsically good or bad.

It is plain that Prof. Huxley thinks that it has an important bearing on this question, but I find it extremely hard to see why he does so. Perhaps I can best bring out the difficulty that I feel in the following way. Take the things which Prof. Huxley considers to be intrinsically good, and imagine him to be confronted with an opponent who doubted or denied of any of them that it was intrinsically good. How precisely would he refute his opponent and support his own opinion by appealing to the facts and laws of evolution? Unless the notion of value is surreptitiously imported into the definition of 'evolution', knowledge of the facts and laws of evolution is simply knowledge of the *de facto* nature and order of sequence of successive phases in various lines of development. In this way we may learn that certain lines of development have stopped short, in the sense that a point has been reached after which the successive phases in this line have shown no further increase of complexity-in-unity. By comparing and contrasting such lines with others which stopped short at a more complex stage or which have not yet done so at all we may be able to infer some of the necessary conditions for continued growth of complexity-in-unity in the successive phases of a line of development. This much could be discovered and understood by an intelligent being who had never had the faintest notion of intrinsic value or disvalue; and this is *all* that a knowledge of the facts and laws of evolution, considered as a part of natural science, amounts to.

If, then, Prof. Huxley is to support his own views about the intrinsic value of so-and-so and to refute those of an opponent by appealing to the facts and laws of evolution, there must be a suppressed premiss in the argument. This premiss must be some such proposition as 'States of affairs which have more complexity-in-unity are as such intrinsically better than those which have less complexity-in-unity', or (what is by no means the same) 'Processes of change in which there is increase of complexity-in-unity in the successive phases are intrinsically better than those in which there is stability or diminution in this respect'. (Prof. Huxley might prefer the latter as more 'dynamic', since it ascribes intrinsic value,

not to the separate phases, but to the process of change itself in which they occur.) At any rate he must use *some* 'mixed' premiss, connecting certain *purely factual* characteristics, which are all that a study of evolution can possibly reveal to us, with the *value-characteristics* of intrinsic goodness and badness. I must confess that this seems to me to be so obvious a platitude that I am almost ashamed to insist upon it; but it seems that it is still liable to be ignored.

Now, whatever may be the evidence for such a mixed premiss, it is quite plain that it must be something different from the evidence for the facts and laws of evolution. For the premiss required asserts a connexion between certain of those facts and laws and something else, *viz.* intrinsic value or disvalue, which forms no part of their subject-matter. Therefore, whilst I agree that a knowledge of the facts and laws of evolution might have considerable and increasing relevance to the question whether certain acts would be right or wrong, since it might help us to foresee the large-scale and long-range consequences of such acts, I am unable to see that it has any direct bearing on the question whether certain states of affairs or processes or experiences would be intrinsically good or bad.

C. D. BROAD.

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*Francis Bacon on Communication and Rhetoric.* By KARL R. WALLACE. The University of North Carolina Press, 1943. Pp. xiv + 276. \$5.

STUDENTS of literature must often be surprised at the relatively unimportant place assigned to great writers like Francis Bacon, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Thomas Hobbes in the story of modern philosophy; yet to those who take a wider view the explanation is obvious and significant. In England, the rising sun of Renaissance science was obscured for a longer period by the clouds of the new theology than it was in other parts of Western Europe, so that the earliest modern English philosophers were largely out of touch with what we may call the secular tradition in European thought. This pre-occupation with questions of faith had its compensations. Because of it, the first English scientists preferred crass experimentalism to fine-spun theories, and therefore, when the time came for theorising, it was the genius of Newton, not that of Leibniz, which dominated the whole field of human knowledge.

The Baconian philosophy is at best only a branch line of modern thought. For it, however, Bacon constructed an elaborate Grand Junction Station where every conceivable form of traffic could be handled. Unfortunately, it attracted few passengers, and its designer was unable to provide more than a trickle of experimental

goods for its capacious, but unwieldy, wagons. The well-laden freight trains of Harvey, Petty and Boyle by-passed it shamelessly. Even Hobbes, who purchased a ticket, preferred to build his own line and to make a separate link to connect it with the continental system. Thus it is only in the application of the moral sciences to the problems of persuasion and government, in which Bacon had long and often bitter experience, that we feel ourselves in contact with a mind that is above the level of the common-place. There is, therefore, some real justification for a special study of Bacon's views concerning the application of logic, psychology and ethics to the art of persuasion, which, in fact, is the scope of Professor Wallace's monograph. The pity is that he has expanded what might have been a well-annotated essay into a dull and pretentious volume, written in a style that is wholly unworthy of a Professor of Rhetoric in the land of Abraham Lincoln. The elaborate bibliography that follows will no doubt prove valuable to students of the history of rhetoric between 1500 and 1700, but it contains so many flaws detectable at a glance that one is afraid to think what might be the results of a closer scrutiny. Twenty, or even ten, years ago, such faults would have attracted little notice; but now that the American Universities are winning for themselves such pre-eminence in the field of scholarship, the appearance of such a work under the auspices of the University of North Carolina is distinctly unfortunate.

Bacon's views on rhetoric are simple and easily summarised. 'The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the Will' (p. 24). Students of public speaking will be reminded of Mr. Lloyd George's loose, but convenient, description of oratory as 'the moving of men to action'. Students of philosophy will note the division of faculties that is involved in the dictum. When the Imagination and, of course, its sensory correlates, is used in the service of Reason, the mind is engaged in the pursuit of truth; when the Imagination is used in the service of the Will, the end is not truth, but action. Sometimes, however, the Imagination represents to us simply what is pleasing to the passions, and then the Will is wrongly directed. Sometimes it is used to discipline the passions to courses of action of which Reason approves, and then the Will is directed toward what is Good. There is nothing very startling about this theory, and it might have been improved greatly by restricting the term 'Will' to rational volition, conceived as the appropriate action resulting from *cognitio boni atque mali*. The significant element is Bacon's view that there is a right and a wrong way of using the Imagination in order to incite people to action, and that Rhetoric is the act of persuading them through their imaginations to do what is in accordance with reason.

How then is the Imagination applied to the Will in the service of Reason? Bacon distinguishes four stages, which he calls the Art of Invention, the Art of Judgment, the Art of Memory and the

Art of Transmission. The first three may be treated as preliminaries to Rhetoric; the fourth is the art of moving other people's wills to a pre-conceived end by the use of the written or the spoken word. I shall say something regarding each of these arts.

By the Art of Invention Bacon understood a means of discovering suitable lines of argument regarding any matter that might become a subject of discussion. He believed that the best way of aiding the mind toward relevant arguments was to compile a list of those which were likely to occur; this collection he called a *Promptuary*, and to it are assigned the *Colours of Good and Evil*, the *Formulae* and the *Antitheta*. As a further aid he proposed the *Topica*, a set of directions enabling one to discover the position of any question in the general system of knowledge, and the correct procedure in further investigation or analysis. In fact, it looks as though the *Topica* would be the sort of plan of scientific inquiry that would result from a logical survey of the sciences in the best Cambridge manner.

Secondly, there is the Art of Judgment, which is concerned with proof and refutation. Bacon, as is well known, recommended the Inductive Method, but had very little that was profound to say concerning it. What we do note is that his distinction between Anticipations and Interpretations of Nature was really a distinction between two complementary aspects of inductive method, viz. Experiment and Observation. His treatment of Deduction is also significant, since his insistence on the two contrasted methods called by him *Ostensive Proof* and *Reductio ad Absurdum*, cleared away many of the cobwebs that surrounded the old views on Syllogistic Argument. Still more interesting is what he has to say on refutation, for besides the ordinary sophistical and verbal fallacies, he distinguishes certain types of error that arise from the inherent weaknesses of the imagination. The Idols of the Tribe and the Cave are the individual forms of this deficiency; the Idols of the Market-Place and the Theatre its social forms. This account of the sources of error is the most important contribution that Bacon made to logic, and, significantly enough, it is drawn from a wide experience of life rather than from a detailed acquaintance with scientific procedure. There is food for a life-time's reflection in what he says about the Sophistical, the Empirical and the Superstitious types of error among philosophers.

Thirdly, we come to the Art of Memory. Bacon has nothing of special importance to say concerning this, so we may pass it over, except to note that he believed that the best method of speaking was partly memorised and partly extemporaneous, a judgment that might be commended to young politicians. He distrusted feats of memorisation on the ground that they destroyed the intellectual powers.

The fourth and last division of Rhetoric is the Art of Transmission,

which is the practical aspect of Rhetoric. Much of what Bacon says on this subject is of no philosophical importance whatever, but those who are interested in the theory of speech may be grateful for a brief account of his manner of approaching the subject. He starts with the Organ of Discourse, maintaining that an account of this would have to include the study of speech and words, beginning with purely grammatical questions, and going on to questions concerning æsthetics and concerning the possibility of a purely logical system of communication, translatable into any system whatever.

After having dealt with speech and words, he considers the various different Methods of Discourse. Here there is much that is interesting, if we remember the ascendancy achieved by the Geometrical Method in the writings of seventeenth-century philosophers. Even Ramus could not revive dichotomy as more than a convenient form of arrangement. It is greatly to Bacon's credit that he recognised this fundamental antithesis between methods of exposition and methods of research, for this is where systems like Spinoza's *Ethics* and McTaggart's *Nature of Existence*, which conjure moral rabbits out of an empty hat of definitions, do so signally err. His words on the contrast between the Magisterial and the Initiative Method are worth quoting.

'The magistral method teaches; the initiative initiates. The magistral requires that what is told should be believed; the initiative that it should be examined. The one transmits knowledge to the crowd of learners; the other to the sons, as it were, of science. The end of the one is the use of knowledges as they now are; of the other the continuation and further progression of them' (p. 134). It requires no great insight to see that the second method can be applied equally to questions of experimental science and to questions proper to the moral sciences. In the latter field, it may not produce very startling results, but in the hands of G. E. Moore it has enabled many to understand the fundamental sources of error in certain magistral systems and the unsuspected subtleties in common-sense forms of speech.

Bacon also understood that methods of speech may easily degenerate into methods of imposture, as the following passage indicates. 'There are three kinds of speech, and, as it were, styles of imposture. The first kind is of those who as soon as they get any subject-matter, straightway make an art out of it, fit it with technical terms, reduce all into distinctions, thence educe positions and assertions, and frame oppositions by questions and answers. Hence the rubbish and pother of the schoolmen. The second kind is of those who through vanity of wit, as a kind of holy poets, imagine and invent all variety of stories and examples for the training and moulding of men's minds: whence the lives of the fathers, and innumerable figments of ancient heretics. The third kind is of those who fill everything with mysteries and high-sounding phrases, allegories and allusions: which mystic and



Gnostic style of discourse a number of heretics here adopted. Of these kinds, the first catches and entangles man's sense and understanding, the second allures, the third astonishes; all seduce it (p. 137).

On what Bacon says about the Illustration of Discourse, which is the third part of the Art of Transmission, I do not propose to comment, because such matters lie outside the scope of philosophy. There are, however, certain matters dealt with under the heading 'Pathos and Ethos in Rhetorical Discourse' (pp. 107-132) that may fittingly bring this sketch of Bacon's philosophy of discourse to a close. Bacon believed that the end of Rhetoric was to make what was intrinsically or instrumentally good acceptable to the will of others. He was fully aware of the fact that our passions naturally cause us to prefer the apparent to the real good, and he realised also the opposition between social and individual good. Ethical systems like that of T. H. Green he would no doubt have excused on the ground that they were rhetorical essays, attempting to reconcile what is really good with what appears good to different individuals, swayed as they are by their own passions. Persuasion, as he observes, is usually dependent upon external factors like the reputation of the speaker or writer and his capacity to make his arguments appeal to the emotions of his hearers. Yet he never hesitates to affirm that the duty of the rhetorician is to make right actions acceptable by means of valid arguments, subordinating beauty and plausibility to truth and righteousness. Those who are familiar with the text of Bacon's numerous speeches and political memoranda will admit that he was in great measure true to those ideals. Despite the painful scandal that concluded his career as Lord Chancellor, he was much superior to most of his contemporaries in both character and intellect; and history, which cares more for achievement than for propriety, has not denied to him a just recognition of his merits. Though too much of a lawyer and theologian to reach the highest flights in philosophy or science, he recognised, unlike many of the best men of his age, that those pursuits were worthy of encouragement in the Commonwealth, and, by so doing, he prepared the way for both Locke and Newton.

ARTHUR T. SHILLINGLAW.

#### IV.—NEW BOOKS.

*The Destiny of Western Man.* By W. T. STACE. Reynal and Hitchcock, New York, 1942. Pp. x + 322. 15s.

THIS book was awarded the prize in a contest as "the best non-fiction book written for the general reader by a member of the staff of an American college or university", and it is certainly well-adapted for this purpose. Though I could not go so far as the reviewer quoted on the cover, who called it "as searching and rousing a book as any in our age", it must be admitted that its literary style is such as to make it very agreeable reading, and this together with its sparkling lucidity renders it capable of appealing to a wider circle than most books on philosophy.

The title is distinctly misleading, for the work is really an exposition of the fundamental principles of moral philosophy in relation to the issue between us and the Nazis. As such it, though containing many points of interest and value, does not in my opinion escape serious philosophical confusions which are not adequately excused by the fact that the work is popular. Its main object is the important one of providing rational grounds for the democratic and Christian ideals which we uphold against the new ethics (if it can be dignified with such a title) of the Nazis, so that we may avoid the charge that we, like our enemies, are merely fighting for our irrational prejudices. Professor Stace draws a sharp distinction between two types of ethics, the theory of morality as "immanent" and the theory of morality as "imposed". According to the former the principles of morality follow from human nature, according to the latter they are imposed on us by God or the nature of reality. Any objective non-psychological theory of ethics is apparently put by Professor Stace under the latter head. He himself supports the immanent view, thinking that the other one savours of a *deus ex machina*, and he thinks that a justification of fundamental ethical propositions can only be given on the immanent view. But he overlooks the fact that the classification is not necessarily exclusive. Suppose, as most advocates of the "imposed" view would hold, that human nature could not be adequately understood without assuming an objective moral law, itself independent of human nature, then morality would be both "immanent" and "imposed". Professor Stace, however, attacks the common modern type of subjective ethics which derives ethical propositions, not from our whole nature, but from only a small part, the emotions. He also insists that there is a common human morality, as there is a common human physiology, so that the moral is not just what one type of society commends or commands.

On the author's view moral rules are rules for mental health. The ultimate criterion of their validity is whether they lead to the "most happy, healthy, and satisfactory life",<sup>1</sup> and the refutation of the moral sceptic is that, without making a distinction between goodness and badness, no action and therefore no life is possible.<sup>2</sup> The rules depend on human nature only, and Professor Stace is ready to draw the logical conclusion that it is senseless to describe man as higher than the animals since there is no common standard. Now, the criterion given suffers from a serious ambiguity, as is suggested by the conjunction of the two words,

<sup>1</sup> P. 310.

<sup>2</sup> P. 47.

"happy" and "satisfactory". In a previous work, *The Concept of Morals*,<sup>1</sup> Professor Stace maintained that the criterion was simply conduciveness to the agent's happiness and that experience had shown that the most effective way of securing happiness for oneself was to be unselfish. If this view were maintained consistently, it would provide a straightforward empirical criterion and would be compatible with a fully naturalistic view of ethics. It escapes some of the objections to hedonism since the author does not identify happiness with pleasure; but it is still egoistic in the sense that the only ultimate object one ought to or can pursue is held to be a state of oneself, and this is to my mind a fatal objection. But in the present work Professor Stace adopts a different position. He here admits that the question whether obedience to moral laws is conducive to happiness should be asked rather about the community than about the individual,<sup>2</sup> and he is inclined to dismiss the question whether happiness is the only end as verbal<sup>3</sup>, and substitute the criterion of "satisfactoriness". He says that he means by a "satisfactory" life "one which the liver himself intuitively feels to be satisfactory";<sup>4</sup> but if he is falling back on an intuition of value, he is abandoning his purpose of showing *by argument* what type of ethical ideal is right, and is abandoning the "immanent" position because he is basing his ethical view, not simply on an empirical study of human nature, but on an intuition as to what elements in life have value. How does he know that Nazis would "intuitively feel" the same kind of life to be satisfactory? If, on the other hand, he fell back on identifying the good life with the happy life he would have equally abandoned his purpose, for he would be then assuming in his argument, that the good is happiness without any attempt at a justification of that view. Professor Stace himself points out that the Nazis refuse to admit that happiness is of much value, so that it is useless to refute them by arguing that their ethics do not lead to a happy life.

So much for the author's ultimate criterion. His main positive argument<sup>5</sup> against the Nazi and for the Greco-Christian ethics, which represents our ideals, takes this form. The fundamental characteristic of Greek ethics is to make reason supreme, of Christianity to make sympathy supreme, and of Nazism to make will supreme. It is held that will (used in a wide sense to include all desires) is supreme, and not reason, because we cannot act without desire; but, though this last statement is true and almost a tautology, a short empirical study still discloses that reason can alter our desires enormously. But for it we could only desire the sort of things which animals desire, and those only for the immediate present without foresight into future needs. It is therefore empirically obvious that reason is responsible for most of what makes our life satisfactory, and so must be given a higher place than desire. Now reason realizes that all men are of infinite value in the sense that they are, to themselves at least, of value as an end, not merely as a means, and therefore incommensurable in value with any means; and this principle is obviously incompatible with the ethics of Nazism, and leads logically to the political idea of democracy and to the ethical ideal of Christianity in action. But in the absence of sympathy there will be no effective motive for acting as if beings other than oneself are of ethical value, therefore sympathy and reason must go together. I cannot think such a refutation logically at all conclusive. In the first place it depends on the author's criterion

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan, New York, 1937.

<sup>2</sup> P. 7.

<sup>4</sup> P. 65.

<sup>2</sup> P. 310.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. xi, xii.

as to a satisfactory life, which I have already criticized. Secondly, the argument does not in any case refute a person who admits (as the Nazi would) that reason and sympathy should be used up to a certain point and then thrown overboard in favour of something supposed better, only one who maintained that desire as it exists at the animal level ought to be supreme. In so far as the Nazis exalt desire they obviously do not exalt all desire, but some specific desires such as could only exist at the human level, *e.g.* desire for the glory of one's country; and though Professor Stace is no doubt right in claiming that it is inconsistent to use an argument for the general supremacy of desire in favour of some particular desire, this does not refute the view itself but only an argument brought forward on its behalf. Further, the author has not refuted the view that will, as distinct from desire, is the most valuable factor in our nature, and I should have thought that the Nazis are thinking of will rather than desire. (Kant holds this view, of course in a very different form from the Nazis; and it might be supported on Professor Stace's lines by arguing, as Kant in fact does, that good will is more essential than anything for the attainment of a satisfactory life, as everything else without it may be harmful; yet nobody accuses Kant of over-exalting desire). I do not know what Professor Stace would say to anybody who held that reason should be cultivated just enough to secure one's own greatest pleasure or, alternatively, one's country's greatest good, and no more. What I think to be the element of validity in Stace's argument is that the strict refutation of Nazi ethics could only be achieved either by showing that the effects of its principles must be to produce a type of life such as even a Nazi, if he could bring himself to look at it calmly, would not welcome, or that it was fundamentally inconsistent in insisting on individual unselfishness in relation to the state or race, but in stopping there and not extending it to relations with other peoples. In his account of Christian sympathy Professor Stace is surely wrong in identifying it with the infectious character of emotion by which we tend to feel happy when others about us are happy, and unhappy when others about us are unhappy.<sup>1</sup> There is nothing more ethical in catching emotions from others than in catching colds, and by itself it would be as likely to lead us to avoid the company of unhappy people and banish them from our thoughts as to lead us to help them. And he also, despite his protests, does not seem to have quite rid himself of psychological hedonism. Otherwise, why should he think that our interest in other people's welfare could not be explained unless their happiness produced happiness in us by the principle of sympathy?

I have not left myself space for a discussion of what is much the best part of the book, namely, the definitely political side, including an analysis and demolition of the view of the individual as a mere means to the state and the deduction of the principles of democracy from the general ethical concepts outlined above. The book is also a timely, if moderate, protest against the anti-rationalist reaction so characteristic of modern thought. All "pragmatists" ought to read and ponder the attack made on them in this book, even if they think it not completely fair.

A. C. EWING.

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 109-10.

*Introduction to Logic and to the Methodology of Deductive Sciences.* By ALFRED TARSKI. New York: Oxford University Press; London: H. Milford, 1942. Pp. xviii + 239. 14s.

THIS book appeared originally in Polish in 1936, and was translated into German in 1937. The present edition is based on this German translation, but has been considerably enlarged and revised. In its original form the book was primarily intended for the educated layman; in its present form it is essentially an elementary text-book for university students. In several respects it is an excellent book, and I very much hope that it will be widely read. It is, first of all, eminently clear; and it is eminently clear though some of the topics discussed in it are highly complex and difficult; it is, further, not only clear but both clear and precise; and it is also, in so far as the subject allows, very simple indeed. But I think the chief merit of it lies in this: that it is one of those very few elementary text-books which not merely give the student a good deal of information about mathematical logic, but also teach him *how to do* mathematical logic. That is, it gives the student—what most elementary text-books do not give him—a technique, or at least the elements of a technique, for doing the subject. For all these reasons the book is to be highly recommended; but it must be emphatically stated that it is an introduction to only a very small part of the subject commonly called "logic". And by this I do not mean merely that it omits to discuss a great many important problems belonging to the field of mathematical logic itself, or that it almost entirely omits the traditional Aristotelian theory, or that it does not discuss at all the logic of induction; I mean chiefly that it completely neglects most of those problems and difficulties of logic which have the greatest philosophical interest. Of course, the author may well reply that he was only concerned with one particular trend of logical investigations; but I think that in view of the title, *Introduction to Logic*, a reviewer must be allowed to state this explicitly.

The first chapter, "On the Use of Variables", deals chiefly with variables and constants, "sentential" and "designatory" functions, and existential and universal quantifiers. All these terms are explained in a clear and simple way, though philosophically some of the explanations are not very satisfactory. For instance, the distinction between variables and constants is explained by saying that while a constant "has a well-determined meaning throughout the course of the considerations", the variables "do not possess any meaning by themselves". This may be very useful as a first indication of the distinction, but it clearly needs further elaboration. A more important point concerns Dr. Tarski's general terminology: he constantly talks of true and false *sentences*, and seems to identify sentences sometimes with propositions, sometimes with statements. Thus, the book begins, "Every scientific theory is a system of sentences which are accepted as true and which may be called laws or asserted statements or, for short, simply statements" (p. 3). It is, perhaps, clear what Dr. Tarski means by this; but all the same, sentences cannot (even "for short") be called statements, or asserted statements, or laws: a statement is certainly not the same as a sentence. It seems to me that Dr. Tarski ought to have given some discussion of the relation between sentences, propositions, and statements, and if he wishes to identify sentences with propositions (or with statements), he ought to have made an attempt to justify this.

The second chapter deals with the propositional calculus. Here Dr. Tarski explains the meaning of the most commonly used logical constants, " $\supset$ ", " $\sim$ ", " $\cdot$ ", " $\vee$ ", " $\equiv$ ". With regard to material implication (and also material equivalence) I find Dr. Tarski's account rather unsatisfactory. He agrees that there are "considerable differences" between the use of the phrase "if . . . then" in ordinary language and the logician's use of " $\supset$ ". But he goes on to say, "The logicians . . . have decided to simplify and clarify the meaning of this phrase ['if . . . then']; and to free it from psychological factors" (p. 25). And a little later on, still referring to material implication, he says, "If a scientist wants to introduce a concept from everyday life into a science and to establish general laws concerning this concept, he must always make its content clearer, more precise and simpler, and free it from inessential attributes" (p. 28). Now it seems to me that to regard the logician's definition of " $\supset$ " as a *clarification* of the ordinary use of the phrase "if . . . then" is absolutely preposterous; and it seems to me equally preposterous to suppose that those "attributes" of the ordinary use of this phrase which the mathematical logician, in his definition of " $\supset$ ", has left out of account, are "inessential" or "psychological". I think Dr. Tarski ought to have plainly said that the use of " $\supset$ ", though not, of course, unrelated to the ordinary use of "if . . . then", is yet quite different from it, but that logicians have found it useful and important to introduce this notion of material implication, and that no harm can result from reading " $p \supset q$ " as "if  $p$  then  $q$ ", *provided that it is clearly realized, and remembered, that this is not (except, perhaps, in very special cases) what is ordinarily meant by the phrase*. Similar remarks apply, of course, to material equivalence. Dr. Tarski seems to identify material equivalence with what in ordinary language is meant by "if and only if" and by "necessary and sufficient condition" (p. 33). This I should hotly dispute; and I do think that Dr. Tarski ought to have made some attempt to justify such a highly disputable assertion. In this chapter there is also an interesting, though very puzzling, paragraph on the rôle of definitions in deductive systems. Dr. Tarski says that definitions "may assume" the form of a material equivalence; yet, unless I have misunderstood him, he must regard definitions as a *special sort* of material equivalences; and I wish he had explained more clearly and fully *what sort* of material equivalences they are.

The third chapter is concerned with the theory of identity, and contains also an important paragraph on the use of quotation marks. I may mention here that each chapter is followed by numerous and excellent exercises, some of which introduce problems not discussed in the text. The next two chapters deal with the theory of classes and the theory of relations respectively. The second of these chapters is, I think, especially useful because of the great clarity with which it introduces some of the fundamental notions of the theory. Chapter VI is on the Deductive Method. This is an important chapter, and will well repay careful study. It discusses the selection of primitive terms and axioms; model and interpretation of a deductive theory; and the independence, consistency, and completeness of a set of axioms. Dr. Tarski has himself done some extremely valuable work in this field, and the present chapter may well serve as an excellent introduction to this very important group of problems.

The six chapters so far mentioned constitute Part I of the book; Part II, divided into four chapters, is concerned with an application of the principles and methods of mathematical logic to the construction of the



arithmetic of real numbers. This part of the book, displaying again both clarity and precision, should be of considerable value to students for it greatly strengthens one's grasp of the deductive procedures discussed in Part I. Dr. Tarski first gives a set of axioms for a part of the arithmetic to be constructed, and deduces from it a number of theorems (Chapters VII and VIII). In Chapter IX he eliminates the superfluous axioms of the original set, and substitutes a simplified one. Finally, he discusses the consistency and completeness of the system. In the last chapter further axioms are added, and the system thus extended provides a basis for the whole of the arithmetic of real numbers. All this is admirably done, and provides a beautiful and most instructive example of the application of logical methods to mathematics.

C. LEWY.

Received also :—

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- P. N. Rao, *The Schools of Vedānta* (Bhāratiya Vidyā Studies No. 2), Bombay, Bhāratiya Vidya Bhavan, 1943, pp. viii + 132, Rs. 2.
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## V.—NOTES

### ALFRED SIDGWICK, 1850-1943.

ALFRED SIDGWICK was born in 1850 at Skipton, Yorks, the son of R. H. Sidgwick, cotton-manufacturer. Henry Sidgwick, the philosopher, and Arthur Sidgwick, the eminent classical scholar, were his first cousins. He was educated at Rugby and Lincoln College, Oxford, graduating with a 4th class in Jurisprudence. After leaving the University he developed an interest in philosophy. In 1881 he was Bishop Berkeley Fellow in Philosophy in Owens College, Manchester. In 1883 he married Miss C. Ullman of Frankfort-on-Main. Mrs. Sidgwick achieved much success as a novelist, writing at first as Mrs. Andrew Dean and afterwards under her own married name. In their earlier married life the Sidgwicks lived near London; later they settled permanently in the Cornish village of St. Buryan, near Penzance. There Sidgwick died on 22nd December, 1943.

Sidgwick's published books were: *Fallacies* (1883), *Distinction and the Criticism of Beliefs* (1892), *The Process of Argument* (1893), *The Use of Words in Reasoning* (1901), *The Application of Logic* (1910), *Elementary Logic* (1914).

Sidgwick's books attracted little attention at the time of publication and were never used for teaching. The reason for this is quite evident to one who reads them to-day. Sidgwick devoted himself completely to a limited part of the philosophic field, to Logic, which he understood as the study which helps us to distinguish sound arguments from unsound ones. All that he says about logic is judicious and sensible, often important and sometimes novel. But he is never arrestingly brilliant, either in the quality of his ideas or in his manner of expressing them.

In his first book, *Fallacies*, where Sidgwick treats of the methods of proof, he shows that he has thoroughly assimilated the traditional Formal Logic; although under the influence of Mill and Bain, he is more anxious than traditional writers to keep in view the practical side of the science. His *Distinction and the Criticism of Beliefs* deals mainly with the ambiguities which are caused by the fact that the words and phrases which we use in expressing our thoughts are much more clear-cut and antithetical than the natural things to which our thoughts refer. Nature, he argues, is continuous and things shade imperceptibly into one another; whereas words are sharply opposed to each other. This, he says, is the main cause of ambiguity in the expression of thought. In *The Process of Argument* Sidgwick studies the nature of inference, which is the process of forming generalizations from observed facts and of criticizing those generalizations. In his discussion of 'fact' he points out that observation of facts is indistinguishably mixed with inferences based upon those facts, so that it is always possible to criticize alleged facts as containing a large admixture of theory. His general result is to reach a conception of the nature of argument (or battle between belief and doubt) which is much less artificially simplified than that which is provided by traditional logic. We can never attain, nor ought we to desire, anything more than practical working certainty.

As Sidgwick advanced in his mental development he reacted more definitely against traditional views. Towards the end of his *Use of Words*

in *Reasoning* he states the case against Formal Logic. He says that the alleged certainty of Formal Logic is delusive; that the simplification of statements upon which formal logicians insist destroys their practical value, since they can then be applied only to the least disputable cases of reasoning; that the axioms upon which Formal Logic is supposed to be based are mere empty truisms; and that Formal Logic does definite harm by obstructing all attempts to explain the difference between good and bad reasoning. In his *Application of Logic* he undertakes to show that the doctrines set forth in his previous books can be applied to the task of distinguishing good from bad arguments. This task is quite out of the power of Formal Logic. The formal logician is enslaved by words. He does not understand that the words in which an assertion is expressed are quite subordinate to its meaning; that the meaning of an assertion is subordinate to its purpose; and that the truth of assertions is relative to the consequences which can be deduced from them. Sidgwick's last book, *Elementary Logic*, contains a statement of so much of the traditional system as he thought worth preserving, followed by a summary of the improvements which he wished to see made in logic.

Sidgwick will be remembered in the history of British thought chiefly as a protagonist in the reaction against Formal Logic, which has been such a hopeful feature in the British philosophizing of the last 60 or 70 years. His merits in this capacity were very generously recognized by a much more brilliant and successful writer, the late Dr. Canning Schiller. Sidgwick was not an out-and-out anti-formal logician. He did not think (as some of us do) that the doctrines of Formal Logic are a mass of mistakes and delusions. But he performed good service in attacking the outworks of the system. Altogether he did an admirable life's work in his unselfish devotion to a useful though limited field of scientific inquiry.

H. STURT.

#### DEATH OF PROFESSOR G. F. STOUT.

WE regret to announce the death, in August, at Sydney, Australia, of Professor G. F. Stout, who edited *MIND* from the beginning of the New Series in 1892 till the end of 1920. An Obituary Notice will appear in the next number.

#### MIND ASSOCIATION: REPORT OF ANNUAL MEETING

THE FORTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Mind Association was held on 7th July, 1944, in New College, Oxford, the President, Professor H. H. Price, in the chair. The Treasurer's report was adopted. Professor H. H. Price was re-elected President for the ensuing year. Mr. H. Sturt was elected Treasurer and Mr. C. H. Thompson, Auditor. The Executive Committee reported that Professor G. E. Moore had been re-elected Editor and Mrs. M. Kneale Secretary.

The question of a Joint Session in 1945 was discussed. It was agreed that it was impossible to make plans at present, but that, should later circumstances seem favourable, the Executive Committee should reconsider the question in consultation with the Officers of the Aristotelian Society.

